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DUNGEON

A Dungeons & Dragons® Roleplaying Game Supplement

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DUNGEON

Warrens of the Stone Giant Thane

A D&D® adventure for characters of levels 14-16

By Christopher Perkins

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Introduction

This adventure draws its inspiration from the tripartite "G" series of modules written by Gary Gygax in the 1970s—a series that was later collected into a single adventure module titled *Against the Giants*, published in 1981 by TSR, Inc. The series pitted characters against hill giants, frost giants, and fire giants, but stone giants got the short end of the stick. This adventure gives stone giants their moment to shine.

"Warrens of the Stone Giant Thane" is designed for Dungeons & Dragons® characters of levels 14–16. You can run it as a stand-alone adventure, or you can play it as the second part of a four-part series that begins with "Steading of the Hill Giant Chief" (*Dungeon* 197) and continues with "Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl" (*Dungeon* 199) and "Hall of the Fire Giant King" (*Dungeon* 200).

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Background

Giants have been raiding the civilized lands in large bands, visiting death and destruction upon villages, towns, and farmlands. Entire militias have been conquered, entire crops wiped out. These marauding bands consist of mixed groups of hill giants, stone giants, frost giants, and fire giants, as well as ogres and other monsters allied with the giants.

Determined to repel the invaders, local lords have begun hiring brave adventurers. The first few groups didn't fare well. Some were crushed beneath the boulders and jackboots of rampaging giants, and others simply never returned from the wilderness. However, a new band of adventurers has assembled to punish the destructive giants and banish them from the civilized lands.

Of all the giant lords, Thane Arnak of the stone giants seems the least likely to rally behind the banner of Snurre, king of the fire giants. Until recently, the stone giant thane maintained a steady truce with neighboring clans of dwarves, and stone giants rarely ventured far from their warrens in the craggy foothills of the Crystalmist Mountains. But something has changed. Stone giants have emerged from Howling Crag to join the rampaging hordes, providing needed artillery to Snurre's growing army.

Dwarves are convinced that Arnak still commands the giants of Howling Crag, but they fear that a dark influence has persuaded the thane to act against his better nature. Thane Arnak has indeed gone mad under the influence of an artifact known as the Stone of Madness, which the giants recently unearthed.

If the truth can be revealed and the thane cured, perhaps the alliance between the stone giants and the other giant lords can be sundered. If the alliance cannot be broken, the only recourse is to conquer the Howling Crag and slay Arnak.

Arnak's sister, Belastraya, serves as the castellan of the stronghold and commands its defense. Her brother's madness serves her ambitions, so she has done nothing to rid Arnak of his malady. Instead, she has cultivated promising relationships with the other giant lords and pledged her full support.

Beginning the Adventure

The stone giants occupy a mountain retreat called Howling Crag, named for the loud wind that blows through its many caves. Howling Crag perches atop a rocky hill sheltered by the Crystalmist Mountains, several leagues from the hill giants' steading. You can change the crag's location and the name of the mountain range to better serve the needs of your home campaign.

Characters who do some research on or legwork about the Howling Crag might dig up a few facts. Those who succeed on a DC 21 History check or Streetwise check learn that the giants always have a roc-mounted sentry watching the road to the crag and the environs around it. It's nearly impossible to avoid notice while approaching the crag. A successful DC 29 History check or Streetwise check reveals the secret tunnel north of the crag.

It is assumed that the characters have safely arrived at a spot near the stone giants' stronghold—a small cave, well hidden, where they can remain undetected while they plan their offensive. If the party decides to take an extended rest between forays to Howling Crag, the characters can do it safely at the hidden cave—provided they take precautions not to leave a plain trail.

Quests

In addition to killing foes they encounter in Howling Crag, the characters can pick up a few quests. Another quest might be gained during the adventure.

Minor Quest: Retrieve the Battle Standard

15th-level Minor Quest (240 XP/character)

Stone giant marauders attacked an elven military encampment and stole a battle standard, atop which was a golden falcon. The elves take it as a sign of ill omen that the falcon was lost. Return it to them if you can.

The giants returned to Howling Crag with the stolen battle standard and presented it to Belastraya, who in turn gave it to Mirgvard (see area 2) as tribute for the frost giant jarl, Grugnur. The heroes must retrieve the battle standard to complete this quest.

Minor Quest: Find the Peace Delegates

15th-level Minor Quest (240 XP/character)

A delegation sent to negotiate a truce with Thane Arnak never returned. The group included a human noble named Merlian Saar, his two human bodyguards, and their guides—a pair of goliaths. Find and rescue any survivors.

The delegation can be found in area 12. However, they have been convinced to join the giants and betray their kin for the promise of power. The characters complete this quest if they obtain proof of the delegates' treachery.

Major Quest: Fracture the Alliance

15th-level Major Quest (1,200 XP/character)

Convince Thane Arnak to break his alliance with the other giant lords.

Madness has transformed the once-steady stone giant thane into an evil monster bent on conquest. Thane Arnak's insanity ends with the destruction of the Stone of Madness (area 15). However, even with his wits restored, Arnak is reluctant to break his alliance with King Snurre. If the characters convince the thane to do so, they complete this quest. They cannot complete the quest by slaying Arnak.

Running the Adventure

This adventure is location-based. All of the encounters are keyed to the maps of Howling Crag that appear throughout the adventure text.

Rests

The adventure is designed to allow characters to take short rests between encounters. However, characters needing an extended rest might have to withdraw from the dungeon to avoid incessant attacks.

Players might be reluctant to take an extended rest and thereby allow the giants to fortify their defenses, but that's a choice they must make. As the Dungeon Master, you need to decide what happens while the characters take an extended rest and the extent to which the giants recover from the party's most recent assault. Consider adding one group of reinforcements (see "Giant Reinforcements" below), and have the giants take a few sensible precautions to prepare for the party's return.

Treasure

The treasure found in this adventure was assigned using the parcel technique of distribution (see page 298 of *Rules Compendium*™) to ensure that the characters get the appropriate amount of treasure for their level. Feel free to replace listed items with other items of a similar level.

In addition to treasure, giants often possess mundane items of little worth. As the characters loot corpses and plunder treasure chests, feel free to throw in a few items from the following table.

MUNDANE TREASURES

d20	Mundane Item
1	Handaxe blade (used as a hand chopper)
2	Metal helm (used as a bowl) and wooden spoon
3	Moldy and stinky wheel of cheese
4	Shabby cloak (wool or hide)
5	Bone comb
6	Iron cooking pot
7	Drinking horn
8	Skinning knife
9	Haunch of meat
10	Mangy fur pelt
11	Small bag of salt
12	Old sandals
13	Waterskin (full)
14	Cask of ale (half empty)
15	Necklace of animal fangs or finger bones
16	5-foot length of chain
17	Bag of skulls
18	Bag of dried mushrooms
19	50-foot coil of hemp rope
20	Carved wooden idol

Giant Reinforcements

Not all of the stone giants that live in Howling Crag are present when the characters attack. A number of them are out on raids and hunting expeditions. Each time the characters take an extended rest during their conquest of Howling Crag and its nest of warrens, they run the risk of encountering giant reinforcements.

2 Stone Giants — **Level 14 Soldier**
Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant) — XP 1,000 each

HP 140; **Bloodied** 70 — **Initiative** +12
AC 30, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 26 — **Perception** +12
Speed 8 (earth walk) — Low-light vision
Immune petrification

Standard Actions

Stone Greatclub (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 11 damage, and the giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.

Hurl Rock ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 13 damage.

Staggering Sweep (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Attack: Close blast 2 (creatures in the blast); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 11 damage, the giant pushes the target up to 2 squares, and the giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.
Effect: The giant shifts 2 squares but must remain within 2 squares of any creatures marked by it.

Triggered Actions

Hardened Threat ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: A creature marked by the giant and within its reach willingly moves.
Effect (Opportunity Action): The giant uses *stone greatclub* against the triggering creature.

Stone Bones ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: The giant is hit by an attack.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The giant gains resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.

Skills Athletics +18, Stealth +15
Str 22 (+13) — **Dex** 16 (+10) — **Wis** 20 (+12)
Con 20 (+12) — **Int** 10 (+7) — **Cha** 11 (+7)
Alignment unaligned — **Languages** Giant
Equipment greatclub, 3 rocks

4 Young Stone Giants	Level 14 Minion Artillery
Medium elemental humanoid (earth, giant)	XP 250 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +10
AC 28, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 25	**Perception** +10
Speed 6 (earth walk)	Low-light vision
Immune petrification	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Greatclub** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC	
Hit: 11 damage.	
Hurl Rock ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +21 vs. AC	
Hit: 11 damage.	
Triggered Actions	
Stone Bones ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: The giant takes damage.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The damage is reduced to 0.	
Skills Athletics +16, Stealth +15	
Str 18 (+11) **Dex** 17 (+10) **Wis** 17 (+10)	
Con 18 (+11) **Int** 10 (+7) **Cha** 10 (+7)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Giant	
Equipment greatclub, 5 rocks	

A typical gang of reinforcements includes two adult stone giants, four young stone giants, and a dire krenshar. Feel free to stage the encounter with these forces anywhere in the vicinity of Howling Crag or in its warrens.

Use these encounters sparingly. Too many encounters with reinforcements will result in the characters amassing more XP and gaining levels faster than anticipated.

Captured!

Even if the entire party is defeated in Howling Crag, the adventure isn't necessarily over. At your discretion, characters who aren't killed can be stripped of their gear and locked in area 2D until Belastraya figures out what to do with them. If she is among the slain, the characters are brought to Thane Arnak and caged in area 15C.

Dire Krenshar	Level 14 Controller
Large natural beast	XP 1,000
HP 140; **Bloodied** 70	**Initiative** +11
AC 28, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 25	**Perception** +12
Speed 8	Low-light vision
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 12 damage, and the target falls prone.	
Terrifying Roar (fear, thunder) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Attack: Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +17 vs. Will	
Hit: 2d10 + 5 thunder damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). If the target was already dazed, it is also weakened (save ends both).	
Minor Actions	
Unnerving Skull (fear, gaze) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)	
Attack: Close burst 5 (one creature in the burst); +17 vs. Will	
Hit: The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).	
Skills Intimidate +15	
Str 21 (+12) **Dex** 18 (+11) **Wis** 10 (+7)	
Con 20 (+12) **Int** 2 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+10)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

If the characters convince their captors that they are worth something alive, they might be held for ransom or put to work as slave labor, thus giving the heroes more time to plan their escape. Once they escape, the characters can try to recover their stolen gear. Their nonmagical gear is kept in area 2D; any treasure or magic items formerly in their possession are in area 4B.

Players whose characters were killed can create new characters, if they wish—perhaps survivors of another party defeated by the giants.

Escaping captivity can be handled as a skill challenge that uses Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Perception, and Thievery (moderate DCs). No single skill can be used more than three times (successfully or not), and to escape, the party must achieve 6 successes before 3 failures. If the characters fail the skill challenge, they can try again after an extended rest.

Howling Crag

When the characters travel to the crag, read:
A meandering trail through the foothills turns into a road of carefully set stones. After a mile, the road widens and climbs an escarpment leading up to a rocky crag several hundred feet high. Three naturally formed cones rise another 150 feet above the crag's peak like the spires of a crown.

Perception DC 21: *A huge bird circles high above the crag's peaks.*

Perception DC 29: *A stone giant rides the bird. It's likely to be a sentry for the stone giant hold.*

Nature DC 21: *The bird is a roc, an enormous bird of prey that is natural but has strong elemental ties.*

Characters likely approach Howling Crag on the southern road, even though it's being watched. When the party reaches area 1A, the roc and its rider descend and attack (see 1. Approaching the Gates).

By circling around to the west, north, or east, the party can instead climb 800 feet to reach the courtyard (area 2A) or one of the tunnels carved into the spires. The mountain is easy to climb (Athletics DC 15), but the roc watches for climbers and uses *claw snatch* to rip them from the hillside.

A secret tunnel is located a mile north of Howling Crag. Unless the characters know where to look, they probably won't find it. A massive boulder blocks the tunnel's 15-foot-wide entrance. If the characters can move the boulder (Athletics DC 31), they can follow the upwardly sloping tunnel for several hundred feet, eventually reaching area 8C in the warrens. (Getting past the sliding wall in area 8C is another matter.)

The stone giant stronghold has two levels: the Howling Hilltop (areas 1–4) and the Thane's Warrens (areas 5–15), both detailed below.

Howling Hilltop (Areas 1–4)

The top of the crag is the core of the stone giant stronghold and its strongest defense point. Patrols come and go, and giants routinely cross the courtyard to get from one spire to another.

Light: Bright (daylight or torches).

Ceilings: All ceilings are 25 feet high. Where the wind blows, the giants use *everburning torches* fixed in place. Removing such a torch without breaking it requires a few minutes and a successful DC 30 Thievery check.

Howling Wind: A cold wind blows down from the Crystalmist Mountains and drowns out all but the loudest noises with its incessant howling. The noise grants a +2 bonus to Stealth checks made in any of the encounter locations on the map.

1. Approaching the Gates

Combat Encounter Level 14 (5,000 XP)

The most direct route to the giant stronghold is a stone road that leads up to the gatehouse.

This encounter occurs as the characters approach the gates of Howling Crag. If they come from a direction other than the road leading to the gates, they avoid the stone giant sentries but are spotted and attacked by Thost and Zhakiri. (When the stone giant and the roc join the battle, place them on the map in a location that seems logical.)

Light: Bright (daylight or torches).

Monsters: Thost (stone giant windrider), Zhakiri (roc), 2 stone giants.

As the characters approach on the road, read:
Nestled between two spires of Howling Crag is a stone gatehouse. Atop each of its two towers, a gray-skinned giant watches the road. Wooden posts set with torches follow the road right up to the gates, and a howling wind from the north chills the spirit.

Thost and Zhakiri circle Howling Crag high above the road leading up to the gates. The stone giant sentries stand atop the towers and watch the road and the surrounding area closely.

1A. Road: The road leading up to the gatehouse is made of flat stone tiles. The stone road leading up to the gates (area 1B) is lined with 10-foot-tall wooden torch posts. Every evening, a stone giant replaces the torches mounted on each post and lights them. The torches burn through the night and are usually extinguished by dawn.

1B. Gates: The gatehouse consists of two solid stone towers, between which stand a pair of 20-foot-high doors made from logs (Athletics DC 21 to climb). A heavy wooden beam on the inside of these gates seals them. Lifting the beam requires a DC 21 Athletics check (standard action). The gates can also be smashed open with a successful DC 31 Athletics check.

1C. Guard Towers: These 20-foot-tall towers are carved out of the natural rock. A 5-foot-tall parapet surrounds the top of each tower, granting partial cover to the stone giant that watches the road from atop the tower.

Ladders: A wooden ladder of giant proportions (Athletics DC 10 to climb) leads from the top of each tower to the courtyard.

Rock Piles: A stone giant within 2 squares of one of these piles can use it for additional ammunition for rock hurling. A rock pile is difficult terrain.

Negotiation: If the characters try to talk their way into the stronghold, the stone giants command them, in Giant, to stand in the open no closer than 50 feet (10 squares) from the gates until the castellan arrives. If the characters fail to follow these instructions because they cannot understand the giants or if they choose not to comply, the giants attack. If the

Howling Crag
N
E
S
W
Down to 8A
2D
Down to 5A
4B
X
T T T
T T T
T T T
4A
X
2C
2C
1C
1B
2A
1C
2B
2B
3C
3B
3A
Down to 6B
1A
+100 ft.
+200 ft.
+300 ft.
+400 ft.
+500 ft.
+600 ft.
+700 ft.
+800 ft.
One square = 5 feet

Stone Giant Windrider	Level 14 Controller
Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant)	XP 1,000
HP 140; **Bloodied** 70	**Initiative** +11
AC 28, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 27	**Perception** +18
Speed 8 (earth walk)	Low-light vision
Immune petrification	
Traits	
Immovable Spirit	
The giant, and any friendly beast the giant is riding, can move 3 squares fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.	
Steady Spirit	
The giant, and any friendly beast the giant is riding, can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an effect would knock it, or them, prone.	
Standard Actions	
Longspear (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +19 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d12 + 9 damage, and the target falls prone.	
Windbolt ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +17 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d8 + 9 damage, and the giant slides the target up to 3 squares.	
Thundergust (thunder) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +17 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 1d8 + 13 thunder damage, and the giant slides the target up to 4 squares. The giant can slide the target into the air. If it does so, the target falls at the end of the slide.	
Triggered Actions	
Stone Bones ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: The giant is hit by an attack.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The giant gains resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.	
Skills Acrobatics +16, Athletics +17, Stealth +16	
Str 20 (+12) **Dex** 18 (+11) **Wis** 22 (+13)	
Con 20 (+12) **Int** 10 (+7) **Cha** 11 (+7)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Giant	
Equipment longspear	

characters comply, one of the guards leaves to inform Belastraya, the castellan.

Belastraya sends one of her stone giant advisors (see area 4) to speak on her behalf. From the top of one of the guard towers, he listens to what the characters have to say. If the characters seek an audience with the thane, the advisor tells them that the thane has no interest in such a meeting and tries to frighten the party away. In this case, if the characters do not leave at once, the giants attack.

Characters who try to bluff their way inside by pretending to be allies or emissaries of another giant lord can fool the advisor with a successful DC 21 group Bluff check. If half or more of the characters succeed on this check, the giants open the gates and invite the characters into the courtyard. The advisor returns to Belastraya and urges her to meet with the party, which she does (see area 2 for details).

Tactics: If combat begins, Thost and Zhakiri join the battle on their initiative count during the third round. Thost prefers to make ranged and area attacks, but the reach of his longspear allows him to make melee attacks while mounted. Zhakiri uses *claw snatch* whenever possible.

The stone giants standing atop the towers hurl rocks at enemies in range.

Roc	Level 14 Elite Skirmisher
Huge natural beast	XP 2,000
HP 288; **Bloodied** 144	**Initiative** +14
AC 28, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 25	**Perception** +15
Speed 4, fly 10	
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1	
Standard Actions	
Bite ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +19 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 15 damage.	
Claw Snatch ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The roc flies up to its speed, and it uses *bite* and makes the following attack at any point during the move. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks from creatures the roc attacks.	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +17 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d8 + 12 damage, and the target is grabbed, carried the rest of the roc's move, and released. The target then falls prone in a space adjacent to the roc.	
Str 25 (+14) **Dex** 20 (+12) **Wis** 16 (+10)	
Con 24 (+14) **Int** 2 (+3) **Cha** 12 (+8)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

2 Stone Giants	Level 14 Soldier
Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant)	XP 1,000 each
HP 140; **Bloodied** 70	**Initiative** +12
AC 30, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 26	**Perception** +12
Speed 8 (earth walk)	Low-light vision
Immune petrification	
Standard Actions	
Stone Greatclub (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +21 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 11 damage, and the giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.	
Hurl Rock ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +21 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 13 damage.	
Staggering Sweep (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied	
Attack: Close blast 2 (creatures in the blast); +19 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 11 damage, the giant pushes the target up to 2 squares, and the giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.	
Effect: The giant shifts 2 squares but must remain within 2 squares of any creatures marked by it.	
Triggered Actions	
Hardened Threat ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: A creature marked by the giant and within its reach willingly moves.	
Effect (Opportunity Action): The giant uses *stone greatclub* against the triggering creature.	
Stone Bones ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: The giant is hit by an attack.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The giant gains resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.	
Skills Athletics +18, Stealth +15	
Str 22 (+13) **Dex** 16 (+10) **Wis** 20 (+12)	
Con 20 (+12) **Int** 10 (+7) **Cha** 11 (+7)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Giant	
Equipment greatclub, 3 rocks	

2. Crag's Crown

Combat Encounter Level 16 (7,000 XP)

Howling Crag consists of three 150-foot-tall spires around a roughly circular courtyard that's open to the sky. Five-foot-high ledges form natural walls between the spires.

Light: Bright (daylight or torches).

Monsters: 4 stone giants, 1 wind-claw owlbear, Mirgvard, Nirnvik (giant frost hawk).

Other Creatures: Danica Stonesong.

When the characters see the courtyard, read:

Nestled between the three spires of Howling Crag is a rocky, circular courtyard. A stiff wind howls and fans the flames of a large bonfire with beast carcasses roasting on iron spits above it. Around the fire are stone slabs that serve as crude benches. Here and there, you see piles of rocks, each rock as big as a human head. Two large wooden cages stand about 20 feet from the fire, one containing a screeching owlbear that has white plumage.

Three cave entrances face the courtyard, each one set into a different spire. Flanking the southwest cave entrance are two boulders carved to resemble stone giant heads. Set into the northern cave entrance is a pair of tall stone doors.

Each spire has a 20-foot-tall cave entrance set into its face. The gatehouse (areas 1B–1C) connects the two southern spires, and these spires are connected to the northern spire by 5-foot-high rocky ledges that overlook steep hillsides.

2A. The Courtyard: Stone giants gather, socialize, and cook their meals here. A large fire pit occupies the center of the courtyard, and three stone slabs that serve as benches surround it.

The stone giants and the owlbear are clearly visible to anyone in the courtyard, as are the stone giants on the guard towers (area 1C) if they haven't already been dealt with. The owlbear is locked in a cage at the start of the encounter. Do not place Mirgvard or his frost hawk until they are visible.

Negotiations: If the characters bluffed their way in to see Belastraya, the doors leading to area 4 are open, and the monsters from that area are in the courtyard. The guards close the gates behind the party. If negotiations go awry, the characters have to fight the equivalent of three encounters' worth of monsters at once. For more information on how Belastraya reacts to the party, see "Dealing with Belastraya" below. If combat occurs, place Belastraya, her firetusk boar, and her two advisors on the map close to the entrance to area 4.

Fire Pit: The centerpiece of the courtyard is a blazing bonfire contained in a shallow pit. Enormous logs and hot coals keep the fire burning at all hours, and three or four roasting beast carcasses are impaled on spits. Any creature that enters the fire pit or starts its turn there takes 10 fire damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

Rock Piles: A stone giant within 2 squares of one of these piles can use it for additional ammunition for rock hurling. A rock pile is difficult terrain.

2B. Carved Stone Heads: These two enormous rocks have been carved to resemble stone giant heads. Each head is 15 feet tall and 10 feet wide. The carved heads flank the tunnel entrance to the temple of Ogrémoch (area 3A). The heads are blocking terrain.

2C. Cages: Two large wooden cages stand in the courtyard. One of them holds a wind-claw owlbear. The cages have solid wooden roofs to protect their occupants from rain. The bars on the cage are too widely spaced for it to effectively contain Medium or Small creatures. Unlocking a cage requires a standard action and a successful DC 21 Thievery check. Mirgvard carries the keys.

2D. Mirgvard's Cave: Mirgvard, a frost giant emissary sent from Jarl Grugnur to advise Thane Arnak and Belastraya, has taken over this cave. The frost giant also has a lot of experience in training animals and, at Belastraya's request, has begun domesticating the captured owlbear in area 2C.

The walls are hewn from solid rock, and wooden bars block off a cell in a section of the cave. The frost giant's fur-heaped bed is little more than a 5-foot-high stone ledge. Mirgvard's treasure chest is here, as well as the object of a quest: a stolen elven battle standard (see "Quests," page 2). The stone giants surrendered it to Mirgvard as part of their tribute to the frost giant jarl, Grugnur.

Cell: The wooden door set into the wall of bars is remarkably strong (Athletics DC 31 to break). A thick iron lock binds the door (Thievery DC 29 to unlock). Belastraya (area 4) carries the only key.

Inside the cell is Danica Stonesong, a dwarf sent by a nearby clanhold to help the stone giants expand the warrens under Howling Crag. When Arnak lost his mind, Belastraya imprisoned Danica. If rescued, the dwarf presents the characters with a quest (see "Danica Stonesong," page 11).

Chest: Mirgvard keeps his belongings in this locked box (Thievery DC 22 to open). It contains a crystal diadem (2,500 gp), five gold bracelets (500 gp each), seven 1,000 gp gems, 2,000 gp in a leather sack, and various mundane items (see "Treasure," page 3). The crystal diadem and gold bracelets are tribute from the stone giants that Mirgvard plans to deliver to Jarl Grugnur.

Tactics: When combat erupts, two stone giants rush into melee, while the other two move to the rock piles and hurl rocks.

Mirgvard first opens the owlbear cage and then uses *ice cyclone* as often as he can. The rest of the time, he strikes enemies with his staff or launches a *freezing bolt*, activating the daily power of his *staff of winter* when appropriate.

Nirnvik tries to slow enemies with *freezing screech* and then uses *flyby attack* against one of them, hopefully gaining the benefit of *shattering strike*.

The wind-claw owlbear can attack through the cage bars, but its targets gain cover against those attacks. It has been trained not to attack its captors.

Tactics and statistics for Belastraya and her retinue are given in area 4.

4 Stone Giants — **Level 14 Soldier**
Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant) — XP 1,000 each

HP 140; **Bloodied** 70 — **Initiative** +12
AC 30, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 26 — **Perception** +12
Speed 8 (earth walk) — Low-light vision
Immune petrification

Standard Actions

Stone Greatclub (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 11 damage, and the giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.

Hurl Rock ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 13 damage.

Staggering Sweep (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Attack: Close blast 2 (creatures in the blast); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 11 damage, the giant pushes the target up to 2 squares, and the giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.
Effect: The giant shifts 2 squares but must remain within 2 squares of any creatures marked by it.

Triggered Actions

Hardened Threat ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: A creature marked by the giant and within its reach willingly moves.
Effect (Opportunity Action): The giant uses *stone greatclub* against the triggering creature.

Stone Bones ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: The giant is hit by an attack.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The giant gains resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.

Skills Athletics +18, Stealth +15
Str 22 (+13) **Dex** 16 (+10) **Wis** 20 (+12)
Con 20 (+12) **Int** 10 (+7) **Cha** 11 (+7)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Giant
Equipment greatclub, 3 rocks

Wind-Claw Owlbear — **Level 11 Elite Controller**
Large fey beast (air) — XP 1,200

HP 228; **Bloodied** 114 — **Initiative** +8
AC 25, **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 23 — **Perception** +14
Speed 7 — Darkvision
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Keening Gale ✦ **Aura** 2
Any enemy that ends its turn in the aura takes 5 damage, and the owlbear slides it up to 2 squares as a free action.

Standard Actions

Wind Claw ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +16 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 8 damage, and the owlbear slides the target up to 2 squares and knocks it prone.
Miss: The owlbear can slide the target 1 square.

Disembowel ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The owlbear uses *wind claw* twice against one creature. If both attacks hit, that creature is stunned until the end of the owlbear's next turn.

Beak Snap ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Melee 1 (one creature stunned by the owlbear). The target takes 4d10 + 16 damage.

Triggered Actions

Wind Howl ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: The owlbear is first bloodied.
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +14 vs. Fortitude
Hit: The owlbear pushes the target up to 3 squares and knocks it prone.
Miss: The owlbear can push the target 1 square.

Str 22 (+11) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 18 (+9)
Con 18 (+9) **Int** 2 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+5)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Mirgvard, Frost Giant Emissary — **Level 15 Controller**
Large elemental humanoid (cold, giant) — XP 1,200

HP 150; **Bloodied** 75 — **Initiative** +10
AC 29, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 27 — **Perception** +12
Speed 8 (ice walk)
Resist 15 cold

Traits

Icebound Footing
When an effect pulls, pushes, or slides Mirgvard, he can move up to 2 squares fewer than the effect specifies. Mirgvard can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock him prone.

Standard Actions

Icy Staff (cold, implement) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 12 cold damage.
Effect: Mirgvard slides the target up to 2 squares.

Freezing Bolt (cold, implement) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +18 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d12 + 10 cold damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Ice Cyclone (cold, implement) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +18 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d12 + 12 cold damage, ongoing 10 cold damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends both).
Each Failed Saving Throw: Mirgvard slides the target up to 3 squares.
Effect: Mirgvard slides the target up to 3 squares.

Triggered Actions

Staff of Winter (implement) ✦ **Daily**
Trigger: Mirgvard uses a cold power.
Effect: Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); the target is immobilized (save ends).

Skills Arcana +14, Athletics +18, Diplomacy +15, Intimidate +15
Str 23 (+13) **Dex** 16 (+10) **Wis** 20 (+12)
Con 22 (+13) **Int** 15 (+9) **Cha** 17 (+10)
Alignment evil **Languages** Giant, Primordial
Equipment hide armor, *+3 staff of winter,* helm with red dragon horns

Giant Frost Hawk	Level 11 Skirmisher
Medium elemental beast (cold)	XP 600
HP 114; **Bloodied** 57	**Initiative** +11
AC 25, **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22	**Perception** +13
Speed 4 (clumsy), fly 10	
Resist 15 cold	
Traits	
Shattering Strike (cold)	
The hawk's melee attacks deal 2d8 extra cold damage against a slowed creature.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Talons** (cold) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 3 damage plus 1d10 cold damage.	
Flyby Attack ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The hawk flies up to its speed and uses *talons* at any point during the move. It doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of its attack.	
⊹ **Freezing Screech** (cold) ✦ **Recharge** when the hawk uses *talons*	
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +14 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d8 + 9 cold damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
Str 16 (+8) **Dex** 19 (+9) **Wis** 16 (+8)	
Con 18 (+9) **Int** 2 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+4)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

Dealing with Belastraya

If the characters bluffed their way into the courtyard, they must contend with Belastraya. She has very little tolerance for non-giants, even ones who claim to be emissaries of another giant lord. Follow the guidelines below depending on whether the characters pretend to be from the hill giants, the frost giants, or the fire giants.

Hill Giant Chief Nosnra: Belastraya asks the characters to tell her the name of the stone giant emissary sent to advise Nosnra. The characters can try to use Bluff (DC 21), claiming not to have met the emissary. If the characters provide the correct name (Laerthar), Belastraya says that he would have given them a message to deliver to her. The characters have

no such message, but they can use Bluff again to fake the message (DC 29) or give a reason why Laerthar sent no word (DC 21). However, Laerthar is Belastraya's lover, so she is less likely to be fooled by a story that sounds suspicious.

Frost Giant Jarl Grugnur: Belastraya asks Mirgvard whether he recognizes the party. He indicates that he doesn't, and with a frown, Belastraya asks the characters for the name of the jarl's consort. A character trained in History can attempt a DC 31 check. Success means the character has heard the name Svarhilda. If the party answers correctly, Belastraya demands a scroll from the jarl verifying that what they claim is true. In any case, the characters can attempt a DC 29 Bluff check or Intimidate check to temporarily convince the castellan that they do represent Jarl Grugnur and need no proof of their claim.

Fire Giant King Snurre: Belastraya demands to know the name of the king's youngest son. This question is a trick because Snurre has no sons. A character trained in History can attempt a DC 31 check to know this fact. If the characters give the correct answer, the castellan also requests a written document from Snurre verifying their role as emissaries. The characters can attempt a DC 29 Bluff check or Intimidate check to convince her that they do not need to provide proof. If the characters mention Obmi, Snurre's dwarf advisor, they gain a +5 bonus to this check.

Failure

If Belastraya is ever unconvinced of the characters' honesty, she attacks them.

Success

If the characters dupe Belastraya, she confines them to the courtyard, where they are free to stay until Arnak is ready to grant them an audience. However, Belastraya doesn't tell Arnak about the party. Instead, she sends an advisor to whichever giant lord the characters claim to serve. (The runner leaves the stronghold by means of the secret exit in area 8C.) After five days, the runner returns with the truth.

As the characters wait, they have opportunities to interact with the stone giants who guard the courtyard and get a sense of the stronghold's daily routine. If they befriend the guards, they might learn that Belastraya has sent a runner to check their story. After a few days, a giant patrol returns with the spoils of a successful raid, including a few human prisoners whom Mirgvard feeds to the owlbear.

While the party waits, if any character sneaks off, the guards notice his or her absence within a few minutes. The stone giants react violently to any such trespass.

Missing Delegates: If the characters inquire as to the fate of the delegates sent to meet with Thane

Arnak (see "Quests," page 2), Belastraya or another giant claims that they're deep below Howling Crag, meeting privately with Arnak. A DC 21 Insight check reveals that the speaker isn't telling the whole truth. If pressed, the giant says only, "The dignitaries are alive and well taken care of, I assure you." This statement is the truth, but see area 12 for more information.

Danica Stonesong

Characters who free Danica can allow her to join the party as a companion character. Danica joins up only with those willing to undertake her quest. Her gear remains in her old chamber (area 3C); until she reclaims it, she asks the characters to equip her.

Minor Quest: Help Danica

15th-level Minor Quest (240 XP/character)

Many months ago, before he went mad, Arnak hired ten dwarf stone carvers to adorn the walls of his throne room with bas-reliefs. No one has seen the dwarves since, and their fate is unknown. Danica believes that they are trapped somewhere in the warrens, and she asks the characters to help her find and, if necessary, free the dwarves.

Arnak's pet gorgon petrified the dwarves, and they are now kept in area 11C. If the party discovers the fate of the stone carvers, Danica knows that Shoggo the gardener (area 13) grows a rare mold called gorgonbane that reverses petrification. The characters must restore the dwarves to flesh to complete this quest.

Danica came to Howling Crag to help the giants expand their warrens, but Belastraya refused to let her enter the tunnels or speak to Arnak. Instead, Danica had to answer questions about dwarven clanholds and their defenses. Once she realized Belastraya's ill intentions, Danica began feeding the stone giants misinformation. Eventually, Belastraya caught on and had the dwarf imprisoned.

Danica Stonesong **Level 11 Leader**
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf

HP 90; **Bloodied** 45; **Healing Surges** 11 — **Initiative** +5
AC 26, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22 — **Perception** +7
Speed 5 — Low-light vision

Traits

☼ **Combat Leader** ✦ **Aura** 10
Allies in the aura gain a +2 bonus to initiative checks.

Stand the Ground
Danica can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.

Steady-Footed
Danica can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock her prone.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Warhammer** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +17 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 7 damage.

⸸ **Hammer Cry** (healing, weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +17 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 7 damage.
Effect: An ally within 5 squares of Danica can spend a healing surge.

✧ **Rallying Cry** (healing) ✦ **Daily**
Effect: Close burst 5 (allies in the burst); the target can spend a healing surge and make a saving throw against one effect that a save can end.

Tactical Acumen ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Melee 1 (one ally); the target can make a melee basic attack as a free action, gaining a +2 bonus to the damage roll.

Skills Dungeoneering +14, Endurance +11, History +12

Str 14 (+7)	**Dex** 11 (+5)	**Wis** 14 (+7)
Con 19 (+9)	**Int** 15 (+7)	**Cha** 12 (+6)

Alignment lawful good **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Giant
Equipment scale armor, light shield, warhammer

Through conversations with the stone giants before and after her incarceration, Danica has gleaned the information below. She gladly imparts these facts to her liberators. Danica never had access to the stone giant warrens, so she can describe only what is in areas 1 to 4.

- Beneath Howling Crag is a sprawling network of tunnels and caverns known as the Thane's Warrens. The stone giants have spent years expanding the network.
- A few months ago, the giants unearthed a purple, egg-shaped stone in the great cavern beyond Arnak's throne room. Shortly thereafter, the thane went mad. The stone seems to have corrupted Arnak, driving him to forge alliances with the other giant lords. Utanu, the tribe's seer, has convinced the stone giants that a mighty primordial spirit formerly bound within the stone has possessed Arnak. The stone giants fear the possessed thane and follow him without question.
- Belastraya, the castellan of Howling Crag, is Arnak's sister. Distrustful of non-giants, she has long urged her brother to form alliances with the other giant lords. Although she obeys Arnak's every command, Belastraya holds more influence over the stone giants than he does at present, mostly because he wants no hand in surface affairs.
- The peace delegates sent to negotiate with Thane Arnak are now in league with the giants. Belastraya convinced Merlian Saar, the leader of the delegation, to help her plan raids and identify weaknesses in her enemies' defenses. Somewhere deep in the warrens is a cave containing three crystal formations that can be used as scrying devices. Saar is using them to gather information for the giants.
- An adamantine dragon named Ezevon lives in the warrens. Arnak appeases the dragon with offerings of food and treasure.

3. Eye of Ogrémoch

Combat Encounter Level 14 (5,000 XP)

The stone giants of Howling Crag pay homage to a primordial named Ogrémoch, appeasing it with sacrifices. A stone giant seer named Utanu maintains the temple, such as it is. Utanu was born with a third eye in the middle of his forehead, which grants him glimpses of the future. This power gives him a great deal of influence in the tribe.

After receiving vivid dreams of an artifact buried beneath Howling Crag, Utanu convinced Thane Arnak to build a stronghold atop the hill. Utanu believed that Ogrémoch sent the dreams, and the seer also suspected that the buried artifact might be a fragment of the primordial (a belief that Utanu kept to himself). In truth, a malevolent entity known as the Elder Elemental Eye sent Utanu the dreams for the sole purpose of unearthing the Stone of Madness.

Light: Bright (torches).

Monsters: Utanu, 3 galeb duhr rockbreakers.

When the characters reach this area, read:

This cave is some kind of temple, its high ceiling supported by a natural column of rock. A sculpted stone altar rises from the floor, and upon it rests the carcass of a skinned, mounted boar. Decorating the wall behind the altar is a mural made of red clay and chalk that depicts a massive creature resembling a walking mountain. Chalk figures of stone giants dance and cower at its feet.

A howling wind enters the temple through a northwest opening. Curtains hiding two smaller caves flap in the wind. A passage to the south turns into a ramp leading down, guarded by several burly creatures made of living rock.

Standing in the middle of the room is a stone giant with red clay smeared in jagged lines across his rocky flesh. A third eye grows in the middle of his forehead, and all three eyes study you carefully as the giant clenches his fists.

Arcana DC 21: *The creature in the mural is Ogrémoch, an evil primordial.*

Utanu the Seer

For years, Utanu has had dreams of a powerful artifact hidden beneath Howling Crag—a relic of the Dawn War between the gods and the primordials. At first, he believed the artifact to be a piece of the body of Ogrémoch, a primordial banished from the world long ago. Prolonged excavation led to the discovery of something else: a purple, egg-shaped stone that Utanu calls the *Ghal-Thrad*, "the Stone of Madness." Unearthing the stone not only corrupted Thane Arnak but also brought an end to Utanu's dreams, and the seer spends long hours contemplating the stone's purpose. He has received no guidance from Ogrémoch and is blind to the fact that the primordial or another entity might be manipulating him.

Utanu is not evil, but he believes that Ogrémoch gave him oracular powers. The seer follows his visions and heeds the wisdom of Ogrémoch without question. Until a character comes within 5 squares of the altar, he stands his ground and orders any characters who enter the temple to leave at once.

Danica and Utanu have a healthy respect for each other, although she believes that his faith is misguided. If Danica is with the characters, she tries to persuade the seer to let them pass unscathed. Utanu seems amenable at first, but his attitude changes if any character moves within 5 squares of the altar.

If a character moves within 5 squares of the altar, read:

The three-eyed giant turns toward the mural behind the altar, as though it were calling out to him. Suddenly he reels and clutches his head. An instant later, his eyes flicker with chilling awareness. He points at you and cries out in a guttural language.

A character who understands Primordial hears: *"I call upon Ogrémoch to shatter your bones and devour your hearts!"*

Utanu has had a vision of the characters becoming the murderers and slavers of countless stone giants. It is a false vision, but the seer believes that it will come to pass unless he intervenes.

3A. Altar Chamber: Any earth creature that starts its turn adjacent to the altar regains 10 hit points. The boar carcass atop the altar is a sacrificial offering to Ogrémoch, and knocking it off the altar (a standard action) causes the altar to lose its power for the rest of the encounter. (Characters can discern this consequence by making a DC 21 Arcana check, Nature check, or Religion check, but only after the altar heals a creature.)

Rock Piles: Since Utanu doesn't carry rocks around with him, he must be within 2 squares of a rock pile to grab a rock and hurl it. Rock piles are difficult terrain.

3B. Utanu's Cave: Utanu's sleeping cave is behind a leather curtain. The cave contains a heap of furs that serves as his bed and a niche in one wall that holds his treasure: a gold chalice set with tiny gems (2,500 gp), a gold roc statuette (2,500 gp), and two *potions of vitality* in clay flasks.

3C. Danica's Cave: Before she was imprisoned in area 2D, Danica Stonesong resided here. A leather curtain divides the altar chamber from her room, which has a simple wooden bed with a rug laid before it. Niches in the walls hold various mundane items, including a tinderbox, a lantern, a flask of oil, a small mirror, a hairbrush, and Danica's weapons and armor.

Tactics: Utanu prefers to attack with his fists. Whenever possible, he tries to attack prone targets or flank enemies with the galeb duhrs. When first damaged with a number of enemies nearby, he uses *curse of Ogrémoch*. He does the same when first bloodied

and then moves adjacent to the altar so that he can benefit from its healing properties.

The galeb duhrs use *stone burst* to attack clustered enemies and cover all possible exits with difficult terrain. Then they use *shock wave* to escape melee so they can continue their *stone burst* barrages. One galeb duhr might work with Utanu to flank a tough target.

Utanu, Stone Giant Seer Level 14 Elite Skirmisher
Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant) XP 2,000

HP 286; **Bloodied** 143 **Initiative** +12
AC 28, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 26 **Perception** +14
Speed 8 (earth walk) Low-light vision, blindsight 5
Immune petrification
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Standard Actions

Rockslide Fist ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 13 damage, and 2d8 extra damage if the target is granting combat advantage to Utanu.
Effect: Utanu shifts up to 2 squares.

Hurl Rock ✦ At-Will
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 11 damage.

Stone Flurry ✦ At-Will
Effect: Utanu makes two basic attacks, and each time he hits, he slides the target up to 2 squares.

Minor Actions

Third Eye ✦ Recharge when Utanu spends an action point
Effect: Utanu glimpses the future. Until the start of his next turn, he gains a +5 bonus to all defenses.

Triggered Actions

Curse of Ogrémoch ✦ Recharge when first bloodied
Trigger: Utanu takes damage.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); the target is slowed (save ends).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is restrained (save ends).
Aftereffect: The target is slowed until the end of its next turn.

Stone Bones ✦ At-Will
Trigger: Utanu is hit by an attack.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): Utanu gains resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.

Skills Athletics +18, Insight +14, Intimidate +17, Stealth +15
Str 22 (+13) **Dex** 17 (+10) **Wis** 15 (+9)
Con 23 (+13) **Int** 12 (+8) **Cha** 21 (+12)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Dwarven, Giant, Primordial

3 Galeb Duhr Rockbreakers Level 14 Artillery
Medium elemental humanoid (earth) XP 1,000 each

HP 113; **Bloodied** 56 **Initiative** +7
AC 28, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 26 **Perception** +16
Speed 4 (earth walk), burrow 6 Tremorsense 10
Immune petrification, poison

Standard Actions

Slam ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 12 damage.

Stone Burst (zone) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage.
Effect: The burst creates a zone of difficult terrain that lasts until the end of the encounter. Creatures that have earth walk can ignore this difficult terrain.

Shock Wave ✦ Recharge when first bloodied
Attack: Close burst 1 (creatures in the burst); +17 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + 13 damage, the galeb duhr pushes the target up to 3 squares, and the target falls prone.

Skills Stealth +12
Str 20 (+12) **Dex** 11 (+7) **Wis** 18 (+11)
Con 23 (+13) **Int** 14 (+9) **Cha** 13 (+8)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Dwarven, Giant

4. The Castellan

Combat Encounter Level 15 (6,000 XP)

Two 19-foot-high solid stone doors block the entrance to Belastraya's chambers. The doors are not locked and swing inward, but they are extremely heavy. A Large creature can open a heavy stone door as a minor action; a Medium or smaller creature must use a standard action to open it, or a minor action and a successful DC 21 Athletics check.

Light: Bright (torches).

Monsters: Belastraya, Haargo (firetusk boar), 2 stone giant advisors.

Trap: Rockfall trap.

When the characters enter area 4A, read:
Large painted masks hang on the walls, and a stone chair occupies a southwestern alcove. Torches in sconces illuminate the area. A howling wind enters through a gap in the northwest wall. A fluttering curtain conceals a bedchamber to the east, and a passage slopes down to the north.

The wooden masks are beautiful but not valuable.

4A. The Castellan's Cave: Belastraya listens to the counsel of her advisors in this cave. She also entertains guests here on rare occasions. Heavy stone doors stand between this cave and the courtyard.

Rockfall Trap: Just inside the doors, the stone giants have rigged a trap. A thick rope hangs from the ceiling next to the stone chair, and another one hangs just behind the curtain in area 4B. Pulling on either rope causes stone blocks in the ceiling to dislodge and fall (see the trap's statistics block for details).

Rock Pile: A stone giant within 2 squares of this pile can use it for additional ammunition for rock hurling. The rock pile is difficult terrain.

Stone Chair: This high seat is difficult terrain.

4B. Belastraya's Cave: The castellan's sleeping cave lies beyond a leather curtain. Belastraya's bed is a 5-foot-high stone ledge, across from which stands a wardrobe. In a nearby alcove rests a large, unlocked stone chest containing Belastraya's treasure: a pair of *eladrin boots* (or another level 16 uncommon magic item), a gold-inlaid box set with mother-of-pearl (2,500 gp), a jade statuette of a manticore (1,500 gp), a *potion of vitality*, and various mundane items (see "Treasure," page 3). In addition to these items and trinkets, Belastraya wears a golden torc (2,000 gp) that symbolizes her role as castellan. She also has the key to Danica Stonesong's cell in area 2D.

Tactics: If the adventurers threaten Belastraya in her lair, she activates the rockfall trap as soon as she can catch two or more enemies in the trapped area. She uses *meld into stone* to surprise her foes and extricate herself from dangerous situations.

Haargo uses *firetusk rush* to plow through the ranks of the enemy. If it can maneuver behind the characters, it does so. It uses *gore* until bloodied, at which point it tries to use *firetusk rush* again. Haargo's tusks burst into flame while it is bloodied.

Belastraya, Stone Giant Castellan — **Level 14 Elite Lurker**
Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant) — XP 2,000

HP 220; **Bloodied** 110 — **Initiative** +15
AC 28, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 26 — **Perception** +12
Speed 8 (earth walk) — Low-light vision
Immune petrification
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Combat Advantage
Belastraya deals 2d10 extra damage to any target granting combat advantage to her.

Standard Actions

Greatclub (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 13 damage.

Hurl Rock ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 11 damage.

Double Attack ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Belastraya makes two basic attacks.

Meld Into Stone (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: Belastraya must be adjacent to blocking terrain made of stone or earth.
Effect: Belastraya melds into the blocking terrain and is removed from play until the start of her next turn. She then emerges from another section of stone or earth blocking terrain into a space within 10 squares of her previous location. When she reappears, until the end of her next turn, Belastraya gains combat advantage against all enemies and a +10 power bonus to damage rolls.

Skills Athletics +18, Insight +17, Intimidate +15, Stealth +16

Str 22 (+13)	**Dex** 18 (+11)	**Wis** 20 (+12)
Con 20 (+12)	**Int** 15 (+9)	**Cha** 17 (+10)

Alignment evil — **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Giant
Equipment greatclub, golden torc

The stone giant advisors use their powers to hinder and divide enemies, trying to provide combat advantage to Belastraya as often as possible.

2 Stone Giant Advisors **Level 14 Controller**
Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant) XP 1,000 each

HP 143; **Bloodied** 71 **Initiative** +9
AC 28, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 26 **Perception** +9
Speed 8 (earth walk) Low-light vision
Immune petrification

Standard Actions

⊕ **Spear** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 11 damage, and the giant slides the target up to 2 squares.

Hurl Rock (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 13 damage, and the target falls prone.

Stone Skewer ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 3d10 + 11 damage, and the target is restrained (save ends).

Stone Burst (zone) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +17 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 13 damage, and the target falls prone.
Effect: The burst creates a zone of difficult terrain that lasts until the end of the encounter. Creatures that have earth walk can ignore this difficult terrain.

Triggered Actions

Stone Bones ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: The giant is hit by an attack.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The giant gains resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.

Skills Arcana +13, Athletics +18, Dungeoneering +14, Stealth +14
Str 22 (+13) **Dex** 15 (+9) **Wis** 15 (+9)
Con 23 (+13) **Int** 12 (+8) **Cha** 18 (+11)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Dwarven, Giant, Primordial
Equipment hide armor, spear, 3 rocks

Firetusk Boar **Level 14 Brute**
Large fey beast XP 1,000

HP 170; **Bloodied** 85 **Initiative** +11
AC 26, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 23 **Perception** +8
Speed 8

Traits

Firetusk Rage
While the boar is bloodied, it gains resist 10 fire. In addition, its melee attacks gain the fire keyword and deal 10 extra fire damage.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Gore** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 11 damage.

Firetusk Rush ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Effect: The boar can move up to its speed and enter enemies' spaces. Each time the boar enters an enemy's space for the first time during the move, it uses *gore* against that enemy, and on a hit, the enemy also falls prone.

Triggered Actions

Death Strike ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: The boar drops to 0 hit points.
Attack (No Action): The boar uses *gore*.

Str 23 (+13) **Dex** 18 (+11) **Wis** 12 (+8)
Con 20 (+12) **Int** 5 (+4) **Cha** 9 (+6)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Rockfall Trap **Level 14 Lurker**
Trap XP 1,000

Detect Dungeoneering or Perception DC 21 **Initiative** –
Immune attacks

Standard Action

Rockfall ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: A creature pulls a rope connected to the trap.
Attack (No Action): Close burst 1 (creatures in the burst); +17 vs. Reflex
Hit: 4d10 + 11 damage, and the target falls prone.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The area of the burst becomes difficult terrain.

Countermeasures

✦ **Cut Ropes:** A character can cut a rope (AC/Reflex 10, Fortitude 5; immune to necrotic, poison, psychic, forced movement, all conditions, and ongoing damage; hp 5). If both ropes are cut, the trap cannot be triggered.

Thane's Warrens (Areas 5–15)

Thanks to the stone giants' propensity for spelunking and stoneworking, what began as a modest series of naturally formed caves has evolved into a sprawling complex, These warrens form a tangled maze, with passages that slope and pass above and below one another (dotted lines on the map show where passages run under others). The warrens have several features in common.

Light: Where torches are noted, they are set in crude sconces at a height of 10 feet. Only a few areas are kept dark, and the giants carry torches when they visit or pass through these areas.

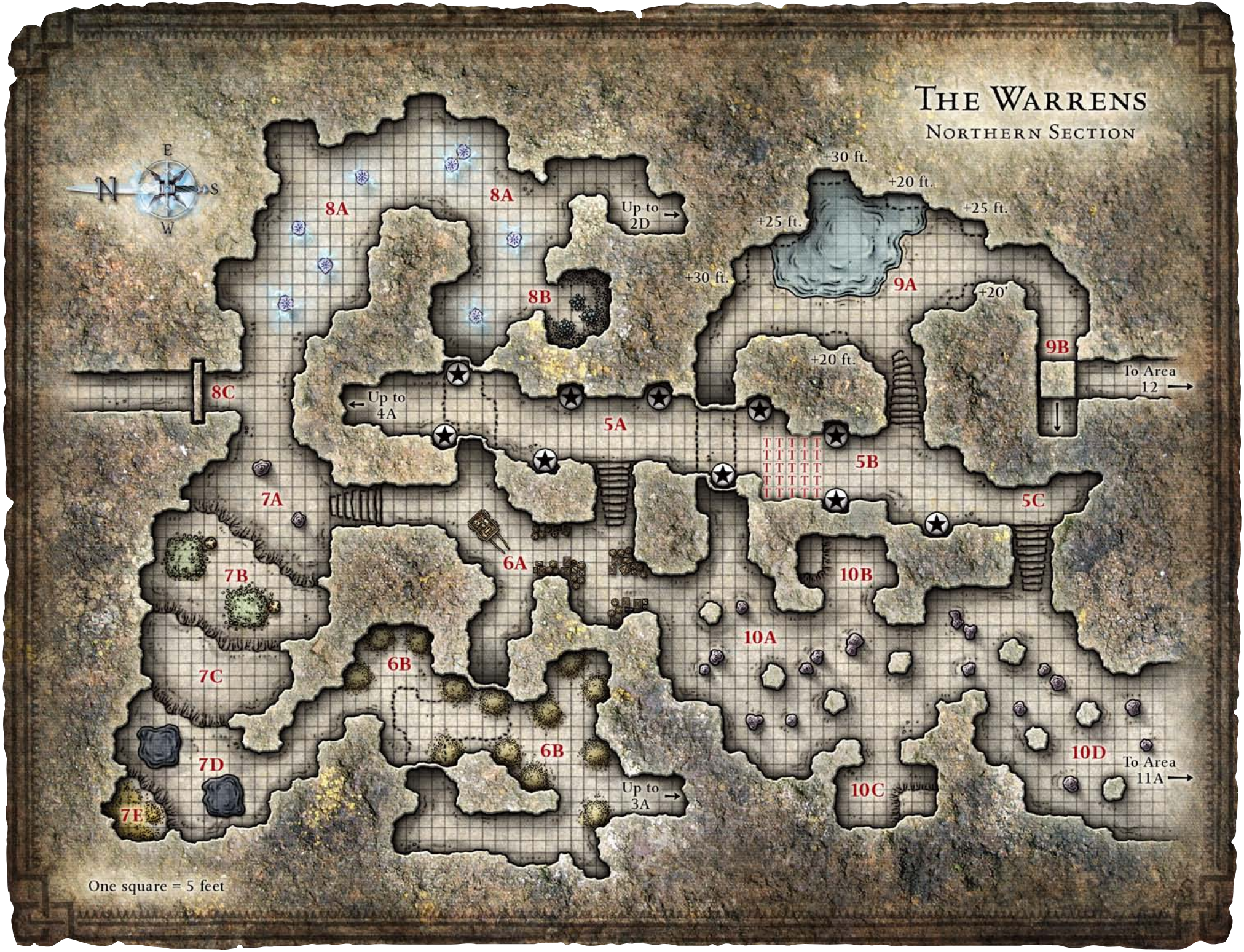
Ceilings: Passageways have 25-foot-high ceilings, whereas ceilings in caverns vary as noted in their descriptions.

Ledges: Rocky ledges appear here and there. Unless otherwise noted, a character can climb a ledge with a DC 15 Athletics check (DC 5 if climbing gear is used).

Rough-Hewn Stairs: Stairs are treated as difficult terrain while ascending them and normal terrain while descending them. The steps, which were carved by dwarves, are not unusually steep.

Sloping Passages: The warrens are full of sloping passages, but these slopes have no effect on play.

Stalactites and Stalagmites: The warrens are full of these rock formations. Stalagmites are usually 10 feet high and blocking terrain.


The Warrens
Northern Section
E
N
S
W
8A
8A
Up to 2D
+30 ft.
+20 ft.
+25 ft.
+25 ft.
+30 ft.
9A
+20'
8B
9B
8C
+20 ft.
To Area 12
Up to 4A
5A
5B
5C
7A
6A
7B
10B
10A
7C
6B
6B
10D
To Area 11A
7D
10C
Up to 3A
7E
One square = 5 feet

5. The Spine

Combat Encounter Level 15 (6,300 XP)

This cavern is called the Spine because it connects to so many other locations in the warrens. The stirge swarms are part of a trap placed here by Thane Arnak. In addition, the giants unearthed the shattered remains of an ancient colossus during their expansion of the warrens and found that the fragments still contained a semblance of life.

Light: Bright (torches).

Monsters: 1 shattered colossus head, 1 shattered colossus hand, 4 stirge suckerling swarms.

Trap: Stirge swarm trap.

When the characters explore this cavern, read:
Torches placed in sconces at a height of 10 feet illuminate this long, high cavern. Between the torches are shallow alcoves, each containing a carved depiction of a stone giant's head roughly 15 feet tall. Each visage is carved with a slightly different expression, but all of them look dour. Several sets of rough-hewn steps lead down.

If the characters confront the remains of the shattered primordial colossus, read:
You hear the sound of something large moving toward you. Out of the shadows rolls an obsidian head bearing the horrid expression of a cruel tyrant. Scuttling alongside it is a black stone claw big enough to crush a human in its grip.

Three sets of rough-hewn stairs lead down to areas 6A, 9A, and 10D. The ceiling in the Spine is 40 feet high.

5A. Carved Heads: The walls of the Spine are lined with shallow alcoves. Nestled in each is a 15-foot-tall, 10-foot-wide stylized carving of a stone giant head. Between the alcoves, torches sputter in sconces at a height of 10 feet above the floor.

5B. Stirge Swarm Trap: The stone giants avoid this section of the Spine because it contains a particularly nasty trap devised by Thane Arnak. The squares marked "T" on the map have stone pressure plates set into the floor. The four stone giant heads closest to the trapped squares are hollow and lead to other caverns where stirges live. Stepping on a pressure plate causes the eyes and mouths of those four heads to open, releasing stirge swarms. The colossus fragments set off the trap if they move across the trapped squares.

5C. Colossus Fragments: In the process of expanding the warrens, the stone giants unearthed two fragments of a shattered stone colossus—its head and one of its hands. The giants soon discovered that the head and hand were still animate. The body parts now serve the giants as cave guardians.

Tactics: The stirge swarms pay no heed to the shattered remains of the primordial colossus, and vice versa. However, the animated head and hand respond to the sound of the stirges being released and leave their alcove in area 5C to confront intruders.

The shattered colossus head rolls over intruders and then proceeds to slam into them relentlessly. It uses *lightning eyes* if it can't hit anything with a melee attack.

The stone hand moves like a giant crawling claw and favors attacking enemies that fall prone. It uses *scuttle* to maneuver into flanking positions.

Shattered Colossus Head	**Level 15 Elite Brute**
Large elemental animate (construct, earth)	XP 2,400
HP 366; **Bloodied** 183	**Initiative** +11
AC 27, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 27	**Perception** +12
Speed 8 (earth walk)	Darkvision
Immune disease, petrification, poison	
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1	
Traits	
☼ **Earthbinding** ✦ **Aura** 2	
The aura is difficult terrain for creatures in contact with the ground. Creatures that have earth walk are not subject to this aura.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Slam** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d12 + 9 damage.	
⚡ **Lightning Eyes** (lightning) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one or two creatures); +18 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d8 + 5 lightning damage, ongoing 10 lightning damage (save ends), and the head pulls the target up to 5 squares.	
Rolling Head ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The head can move up to its speed and enter enemies' spaces. Each time the head enters an enemy's space for the first time during the move, it uses *slam* against that enemy, and on a hit, the enemy also falls prone.	
Str 23 (+13) **Dex** 18 (+11) **Wis** 21 (+12)	
Con 23 (+13) **Int** 6 (+5) **Cha** 10 (+7)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Primordial	

Shattered Colossus Hand	Level 15 Skirmisher
Medium elemental animate (blind, construct, earth)	XP 1,200
HP 148; **Bloodied** 76	**Initiative** +15
AC 29, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 26	**Perception** +11
Speed 8 (earth walk), climb 4	Blindsight 10
Immune blinded, disease, gaze, petrification, poison	

Standard Actions

⊕ Slam ✦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC

Hit: 3d6 + 12 damage, plus 2d6 extra damage against a prone target.

Move Action

Scuttle ✦ At-Will

Effect: The hand shifts up to half its speed.

Str 18 (+11)	**Dex** 23 (+13)	**Wis** 19 (+11)
Con 20 (+12)	**Int** 3 (+3)	**Cha** 15 (+9)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Stirge Swarm Trap	Level 12 Lurker
Trap	XP 700
Detect Dungeoneering or Perception DC 28	**Initiative** –

Dungeoneering or Perception

DC 20: The character notices that the eyes and mouths of the stone heads are retractable stone panels, a sign that the heads are hollow. (Opening a panel triggers the trap.)

Triggered Actions

Stirge Swarm ✦ Encounter

Effect: Four stirge suckerling swarms are released, and each one rolls initiative and attacks on its turn.

Countermeasures

✦ **Avoid:** Acrobatics DC 28. *Success:* The character enters a square containing a pressure plate, using a narrow piece of solid stone between the plates, and doesn't trigger the trap. *Failure (23 or lower):* The trap triggers.

✦ **Disable:** Thievery DC 28. *Success:* A character adjacent to a pressure plate disables it, and that pressure plate square no longer functions. *Failure (23 or lower):* The trap triggers.

4 Stirge Suckerling Swarms	Level 10 Brute
Medium natural beast (swarm)	XP 500 each
HP 128; **Bloodied** 64	**Initiative** +9
AC 22, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 20	**Perception** +7
Speed 2, fly 6	Darkvision
Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks; **Vulnerable** 5 to close and area attacks	

Traits

☼ Blood Frenzy ✦ Aura 1

Any enemy that starts its turn in the aura takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends). If that enemy is already taking untyped ongoing damage, that damage increases by 5.

Swarm

The swarm can occupy the same space as another creature, and an enemy can enter its space, which is difficult terrain. The swarm cannot be pulled, pushed, or slid by melee or ranged attacks. It can squeeze through any opening that is large enough for at least one of the creatures it comprises.

Standard Actions

⊕ Swarm of Suckerlings ✦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC

Hit: 3d6 + 1 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Triggered Actions

Hungry Flight ✦ At-Will

Trigger: An enemy moves away from the swarm.

Effect (Immediate Reaction): The swarm flies up to its speed to the triggering enemy's square or a square adjacent to that enemy. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Skills Stealth +14

Str 10 (+5)	**Dex** 19 (+9)	**Wis** 14 (+7)
Con 18 (+9)	**Int** 1 (+0)	**Cha** 4 (+2)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

6. Giant Caves and Storage

Combat Encounter Level 16 (7,000 XP)

These caves are used for sleeping and storage. Although many stone giants have left Howling Crag to raid and hunt, numerous adult and young giants can be found here, sleeping or otherwise passing the time.

Light: Bright (torches).

Noises: Characters approaching area 6A hear the bleating of the sheep in that area.

Monsters: 4 stone giants, 8 young stone giants, 1 dire krenshar.

Other Creatures: 6 frightened sheep.

When the characters enter area 6A, read:

A wooden cart rests in the northern half of this torchlit cave, surrounded by six fat sheep that stare at you and bleat. The cart is laden with trunks that bear merchant emblems. More crates, casks, barrels, and sacks are gathered in loose piles south of the cart.

The following description applies to area 6B:

Heaps of furs fill these torchlit caves, and the floor is littered with twigs, gnawed bones, and clay flagons. Niches carved into the walls contain various mundane trinkets and tools that the giants have collected.

6A. Storage Caves: The stone giants keep their supplies and provisions here, including goods plundered during raids on farms, villages, and caravans. The crates, casks, barrels, and sacks contain dried meat, dried fruit, rotting vegetables, ale, water, bread, grain, oil, and torches. The wagon contains trunks of stolen armor and weapons of human design. The provisions and the wagon are difficult terrain.

Sheep: The stone giants have captured six sheep. Paralyzed with fear, the animals pose little threat and move only when attacked. Convincing them to move otherwise requires a successful Intimidate check or

Nature check (DC 12 as a standard action; DC 21 as a minor action). On a successful check, all sheep adjacent to the creature that made the check use an immediate action to move half their speed, always moving farther from the creature.

6B. Sleeping Caves: These dwelling areas contain little more than heaps of furs that serve as beds. The giants store their personal belongings in niches carved into the walls. Characters who search the area find a total of 6,500 gp (in gold, silver, and copper coins) and numerous mundane items (see "Treasure," page 3).

Tactics: The adult stone giants attack with their greatclubs and try to keep enemies away from the young giants, who hurl rocks and avoid melee.

The dire krenshar also tries to keep enemies away from the young stone giants.

8 Young Stone Giants **Level 14 Minion Artillery**
Medium elemental humanoid (earth, giant) XP 250 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +10
AC 28, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 25 **Perception** +10
Speed 6 (earth walk) Low-light vision
Immune petrification

Standard Actions

⊕ **Greatclub** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 11 damage.

Hurl Rock ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 11 damage.

Triggered Actions

Stone Bones ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: The giant takes damage.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The damage is reduced to 0.

Skills Athletics +16, Stealth +15
Str 18 (+11) **Dex** 17 (+10) **Wis** 17 (+10)
Con 18 (+11) **Int** 10 (+7) **Cha** 10 (+7)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Giant
Equipment greatclub, 5 rocks

4 Stone Giants **Level 14 Soldier**
Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant) XP 1,000 each

HP 140; **Bloodied** 70 **Initiative** +12
AC 30, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 26 **Perception** +12
Speed 8 (earth walk) Low-light vision
Immune petrification

Standard Actions

⊕ **Stone Greatclub** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 11 damage, and the giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.

Hurl Rock ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 13 damage.

Staggering Sweep (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Attack: Close blast 2 (creatures in the blast); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 11 damage, the giant pushes the target up to 2 squares, and the giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.
Effect: The giant shifts 2 squares but must remain within 2 squares of any creatures marked by it.

Triggered Actions

Hardened Threat ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: A creature marked by the giant and within its reach willingly moves.
Effect (Opportunity Action): The giant uses *stone greatclub* against the triggering creature.

Stone Bones ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: The giant is hit by an attack.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The giant gains resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.

Skills Athletics +18, Stealth +15
Str 22 (+13) **Dex** 16 (+10) **Wis** 20 (+12)
Con 20 (+12) **Int** 10 (+7) **Cha** 11 (+7)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Giant
Equipment greatclub, 3 rocks

Dire Krenshar **Level 14 Controller**
Large natural beast XP 1,000

HP 140; **Bloodied** 70 **Initiative** +11
AC 28, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 25 **Perception** +12
Speed 8 Low-light vision

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 12 damage, and the target falls prone.

Terrifying Roar (fear, thunder) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +17 vs. Will
Hit: 2d10 + 5 thunder damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). If the target was already dazed, it is also weakened (save ends both).

Minor Actions

Unnerving Skull (fear, gaze) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Attack: Close burst 5 (one creature in the burst); +17 vs. Will
Hit: The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

Skills Intimidate +15
Str 21 (+12) **Dex** 18 (+11) **Wis** 10 (+7)
Con 20 (+12) **Int** 2 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+10)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

6 Frightened Sheep **Level 1 Minion Skirmisher**
Small natural beast XP –

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +3
AC 12, **Fortitude** 10, **Reflex** 12, **Will** 9 **Perception** +4
Speed 6

Standard Actions

⊕ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature grabbing the sheep); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 4 damage.

Triggered Actions

Bleat Fleet ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: The sheep is missed by an attack.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The sheep shifts up to half its speed.

Str 7 (-2) **Dex** 12 (+1) **Wis** 9 (-1)
Con 10 (+0) **Int** 2 (-4) **Cha** 7 (-2)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

7. Stepped Cavern

Combat Encounter Level 14 (5,500 XP)

An adult adamantine dragon lairs here. The dragon, Ezevon, arrived after the stone giants and tried to bully them into servitude, but Thane Arnak was able to play to the dragon's greed and arrive at a mutually beneficial arrangement. Ezevon was given space in the warrens to settle, and in exchange for aiding in the giants' defense, the dragon receives regular meals and the occasional bit of treasure.

The cavern that Ezevon chose as its lair has a ceiling lined with stalactites and is particularly damp. This cavern is also divided into tiers by 10-foot-high ledges that descend toward the east. The ledges make it difficult for nonflying creatures to navigate the cavern.

Light: None.

Monsters: Ezevon, 2 doom shriekers.

If the characters enter area 7A, read:

Beyond a pair of stalagmites, you see a cavern stretching toward the west into darkness. At various intervals the floor rises, creating a series of tiers each at least 10 feet higher than the last.

If the characters enter area 7D, read:

You enter a dark, damp cavern that descends toward the east. At various intervals the floor drops away, creating a series of tiers each at least 10 feet lower than the last. Two pools of viscous black slime glimmer in the light, and beyond them is a 10-foot-high raised alcove. Something within the alcove gleams.

The ceiling of this cavern is dotted with stalactites. The floor rises in tiers, each 10 feet higher than the one east of it. Each ledge to the next higher tier requires a DC 15 Athletics check to climb.

Ezevon, Level 14 Solo Soldier
Adult Adamantine Dragon
Large natural magical beast (dragon) XP 5,000

HP 560; **Bloodied** 280 **Initiative** +14
AC 30, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 25 **Perception** +16
Speed 8, fly 10 Darkvision
Resist 20 thunder
Saving Throws +5; **Action Points** 2

Traits

Dragon's Tenacity
If Ezevon is subjected to a stunning effect, it is instead weakened for the effect's duration.

Instinctive Bite
On an initiative of 10 + its initiative check, Ezevon can use a free action to move up to half its speed and use *bite*. If it cannot use a free action to make this attack due to a dominating effect, then that effect ends instead of Ezevon making the attack.

Standard Actions

Bite ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d12 + 13 damage, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 21). If the target is already grabbed by Ezevon, the bite deals 3d12 + 16 damage instead.

Claw ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 12 damage.

Draconic Fury ✦ At-Will
Effect: Ezevon uses *claw* twice and *bite* once.

Breath Weapon (thunder) **✦ Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Close blast 5 (creatures in blast); +17 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d10 + 12 thunder damage, and the target falls prone.
Miss: Half damage.

Triggered Actions

Wing Slam ✦ At-Will
Trigger: An enemy willingly enters or leaves a square within 2 squares to Ezevon.
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Melee 2 (the triggering enemy); +17 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + 12 damage, and the target falls prone.

Thunder Roar (thunder) **✦ Recharge** when Ezevon uses *breath weapon*
Trigger: Ezevon starts its turn after using *breath weapon* during its last turn or after using *bloodied breath*.
Effect: Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); 15 thunder damage.

Bloodied Breath ✦ Encounter
Trigger: Ezevon is first bloodied.
Attack (Free Action): Ezevon's *breath weapon* recharges, and the dragon uses it.

Skills Insight +16, Intimidate +13

Str 23 (+13)	**Dex** 21 (+12)	**Wis** 18 (+11)
Con 20 (+12)	**Int** 11 (+7)	**Cha** 12 (+8)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Draconic

As the cavern continues westward, the ceiling diminishes in height from 50 feet (in area 7A) to 10 feet (in area 7E).

The adamantine dragon sleeps in the western alcove (area 7E), waking to the sounds of combat in area 6B or the doom shriekers in area 7B. Ezevon also awakens if the characters enter its cave carrying light sources.

7A. Cavern Bottom: The bottom tier of the cavern contains little of interest except for a pair of stalagmites.

7B. Fungus Gardens: This tier contains two large patches of fungus known as cloudspores (Dungeoneering DC 15 to identify). As soon as a creature enters a square of these mushrooms, the fungus releases a thick cloud of spores in a close burst 1 around the square entered, creating a zone that provides partial concealment until the end of the encounter. Once a cloudspore patch has discharged a cloud, it cannot do so again for 24 hours.

Near the cloudspore patches are two doom shriekers—oversized mushrooms that emit a piercing shriek whenever non-plant creatures come within 5 squares of them. Ezevon uses the shriekers as an alarm system. If the characters come within 5 squares of them, the resulting shriek awakens the dragon. They also use *piercing shriek* on their turn against enemies in range.

7C. Middle Tier: This tier is bare.

7D. Black Pools: These pools contain grasping slime (Dungeoneering DC 15 to identify), which is difficult terrain. Moreover, a creature that enters a square of grasping slime must succeed on a DC 21 Acrobatics check or Athletics check; on a failed check, the creature's move ends immediately.

7E. Ezevon's Lair: The dragon rests where it can clearly see the whole cave and any intruders. Characters capable of seeing into this alcove can make a Perception check to spot the dragon (DC 15 if Ezevon is asleep; DC 22 if it is awake).

Ezevon keeps its hoard here. Strewn about the alcove are a +4 *orb of drastic resolutions* (or another level 18 uncommon magic item), a *ring of invisibility* (or another level 18 uncommon or rare magic item), an adamantine scepter set with gems (5,000 gp), and 9,000 gp in loose gems and coinage.

2 Doom Shriekers	**Level 14 Minion Lurker**
Medium natural beast (blind, plant)	XP 250 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +8
AC 28, **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 23	**Perception** +7
Speed 1	Blindsight 5
Immune blinded, gaze, illusion, poison	
Traits	
Plant Form	
Until the shrieker takes an action, a creature must succeed on a DC 29 Dungeoneering check to recognize the shrieker as a creature.	
Standard Actions	
Piercing Shriek (thunder) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Close burst 5 (creatures in the burst); +17 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 5 thunder damage.	
Triggered Actions	
Shrieking ✦ At-Will	
Trigger: A creature without the plant keyword ends its turn within 5 squares of the shrieker.	
Effect (Free Action): The shrieker emits a loud shriek that can be heard by all nondeafened creatures within 20 squares of it.	
Str 4 (+4) **Dex** 5 (+4) **Wis** 10 (+7)	
Con 13 (+8) **Int** 1 (+2) **Cha** 1 (+2)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

Tactics: The dragon fiercely defends its lair and treasure. It also attacks those it believes are enemies of the stone giants. Ezevon is not afraid to chase enemies beyond the confines of its cavern, but at the end of each turn while outside the lair, the dragon must make a saving throw; on a roll of 9 or lower, it remembers that it left its treasure unattended and decides to return to area 7E to check on the hoard.

Ezevon is exceedingly greedy. If the characters try to bribe the dragon with treasure, it stops attacking and listens to their offer. In exchange for letting the party leave the lair alive, the dragon demands at least 5,000 gp or the equivalent in gems, art objects, or magic items.

8. Elemental Cavern

Combat Encounter Level 16 (7,600 XP)

This cavern, which has a strong connection to the Elemental Chaos, was one of the features that drew Thane Arnak to Howling Crag. A number of elemental creatures reside here, amid some curious and perilous natural formations.

Light: Bright (crystalshock stalagmites).

Monsters: 2 stormstone furies, 1 tempest wisp, 4 shardstorm vortex funnel clouds.

Hazards: 8 crystalshock stalagmites.

When the characters explore area 8A, read:
Crystalline stalagmites rise from the floor of this high cavern. Crackling arcs of lightning leap from the stalagmites, striking the nearby floor and walls.

When the characters explore area 8B, read:
The walls of this side cave are lined with excavated rubble. In the middle of the floor are the fruits of that excavation: two small piles of melon-sized geodes.

The ceiling in this area is 40 feet high.

8A. Crystalshock Cavern: This cavern contains eight 15-foot-high crystalline stalagmites that channel the raw power of the Elemental Chaos into bolts of lightning. These bolts erupt from the stalagmites at regular intervals, striking non-elemental creatures that get too close. The cave is also home to several elemental creatures that attack intruders who are not escorted by one or more stone giants.

8B. Lightning Geodes: The power of the Elemental Chaos flows through this side cave, creating geodes suffused with lightning. The stone giants harvest these geodes and use them as missile weapons instead of normal rocks. The cave currently holds two small piles of harvested geodes.

Characters searching the piles find a total of 12 lighting geodes. Each geode is a pimply, gray-black rock with an electrically charged blue crystal core and weighs about 15 pounds. The stone giants can throw geodes with *hurl rock*, and the giants in area 10 do just that (see that area for more information).

8C. Blocked Tunnel: A 15-foot-diameter tunnel leads from the warrens to the outdoors, sloping downward gradually and surfacing at a point several hundred feet north of Howling Crag. An enormous boulder blocks this exit and requires a DC 31 Athletics check to roll aside.

In area 8C, a sliding wall of stone blocks access to the tunnel. A large hand-shaped indentation is hewn into the stone wall on each side at a height of 10 feet. The wall can be opened with a successful DC 30 Athletics check (DC 28 if the handholds are used).

Tactics: When the adventurers enter this cavern, have them and the crystalshock stalagmites roll initiative. The elementals lurk in alcoves, and they roll initiative and join the battle as soon as they detect intruders.

The stormstone furies prefer to attack at range using *hurtling thunderstone*. They try to put some distance between one another so they can use *shrapnel burst* periodically without damaging their allies.

The tempest wisp targets enemies with *tumbling updraft* as often as it can. While waiting for that power to recharge, it prefers to use *whistling wind*.

A shardstorm vortex funnel cloud uses *vortex step* to shift into a position where it can catch multiple enemies in its *sandblast* aura before using *abrasive slam*.

The elementals chase fleeing prey as far as area 6A or 7A, or to the top of the ramp leading up to area 2D.

2 Stormstone Furies **Level 14 Artillery**
Medium elemental magical beast (air, earth) XP 1,000 each

HP 113; **Bloodied** 56 **Initiative** +12
AC 26, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 25 **Perception** +9
Speed 6
Immune disease, petrification, poison; **Resist** 10 thunder

Standard Actions

⊕ **Grinding Stones** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 11 damage.

Hurtling Thunderstone (thunder) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: One square that the target occupies becomes the origin square of a secondary attack.
Secondary Attack: Close burst 2 (creatures in burst); +17 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d6 + 6 thunder damage.

Minor Actions

Shrapnel Burst (thunder) ✦ **Recharge** ⚁ ⚂ ⚃
Attack: Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage plus 2d6 thunder damage, and the fury pushes the target up to 2 squares.

Triggered Actions

Meld into Ground (teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: The fury is first bloodied.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The fury sinks into the ground and is removed from play. At the start of its next turn, the fury reappears within 10 squares of its previous space.

Str 16 (+10) **Dex** 20 (+12) **Wis** 15 (+9)
Con 23 (+13) **Int** 6 (+5) **Cha** 20 (+12)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Primordial

Tempest Wisp **Level 13 Controller**
Medium elemental magical beast (air) XP 800

HP 134; **Bloodied** 67 **Initiative** +10
AC 27, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 24 **Perception** +10
Speed 0, fly 7 (hover)
Immune disease, poison

Traits

Insubstantial
While it is not bloodied, the tempest wisp takes half damage from all attacks except those that deal force damage.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Air Slash** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + 12 damage.

Whistling Wind ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +16 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + 10 damage, and the tempest wisp can slide the target 1 square.

Tumbling Updraft ✦ **Recharge** ⚁ ⚂
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +16 vs. Fortitude
Hit: The target is lifted up 20 feet and restrained (save ends).
Each Failed Saving Throw: The target is lifted up another 20 feet.
Successful Saving Throw: The target falls.

Str 15 (+8) **Dex** 19 (+10) **Wis** 19 (+10)
Con 22 (+12) **Int** 9 (+5) **Cha** 14 (+8)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Primordial

4 Shardstorm Vortex Funnelclouds **Level 13 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium elemental magical beast (air, earth) XP 200 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +14
AC 27, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 24 **Perception** +10
Speed 0, fly 8 (hover)
Resist disease, poison

Traits

☼ **Sandblast** ✦ **Aura** 1
Any enemy in the aura takes a -2 penalty to all defenses.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Abrasive Slam** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 10 damage.

Move Actions

Vortex Step ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The shardstorm vortex shifts 4 squares.

Str 11 (+6) **Dex** 22 (+12) **Wis** 19 (+10)
Con 19 (+10) **Int** 5 (+3) **Cha** 6 (+4)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Primordial

8 Crystalshock Stalagmites **Level 10 Blaster**
Hazard XP 500 each

Detect automatic **Initiative** +10
HP 90
AC 24, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 5, **Will** –
Immune disease, fire, forced movement, lightning, necrotic, poison, psychic, all conditions, ongoing damage other than thunder; **Vulnerable** 10 thunder

Arcana or Dungeoneering
DC 18: The character knows that the lightning should stop when the stalagmite is destroyed.
DC 26: The character determines that the stalagmites draw their energy from the Elemental Chaos, but that they are vulnerable to thunder damage.

Standard Actions

Crystalshock (lightning) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Close burst 2 (non-elemental creatures in the burst); +13 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + 4 lightning damage.

Countermeasures

✦ **Suppress:** Arcana (DC 18 as a standard action; DC 26 as a minor action). *Success:* The stalagmite cannot attack on its next turn. *Failure by 5 or more:* The stalagmite attacks.

9. Water Reservoir

Combat Encounter Level 13 (4,400 XP)

This cavern contains the stone giants' supply of fresh water. The gargoyles here have a loose agreement with the giants (mostly because the gargoyles aren't brave enough to cross them).

Perception DC 15: The character hears the sound of dripping water ahead.

Light: None.

Monsters: 4 gargoyle rock hurlers, 8 crystal gargoyles.

When the characters enter area 9A, read:
A large pool of fresh water fills much of the floor of this cavern, leaving a rocky shoreline that stretches from the north tunnel to the south tunnel. Several rocky ledges jut from the walls at varying heights.

Perception DC 24: *A few gargoyles of purple stone crouch on the ledges.*

Perception DC 33: *Several gargoyles of nearly clear crystal also lurk on the ledges.*

When the characters reach area 9B, read:
A smooth block of stone seals the tunnel ahead. Carved into the block are words in Dwarven script.

The ceiling is 40 feet high. Ledge heights are shown on the map.

9A. Water Cavern: Climbing up to a ledge requires DC 20 Athletics checks because the walls are slick.

The pool contains cold, drinkable water. Water-filled squares adjacent to the shore are 2 feet deep and are difficult terrain. The water is 5 feet deep 2–3 squares from the shore and 8 feet deep 4 or more squares from shore.

9B: Rolling Block: The giants have set a block of stone (15 feet on a side) so that it fully obstructs a tunnel leading to the southern warrens, with a few inches of space all around it. The Dwarven words carved on the block translate to "Only the strong may pass." Close inspection reveals that the block is slightly raised and has giant rollers built into its base, arranged so that the block can roll to the west or east.

Moving the block 1 square requires a DC 31 Athletics check and a standard action. Because of the way its rollers are built, the block can be moved only westward or eastward. Left unattended, the block rolls back into place after 5 minutes. Iron spikes driven into the floor can prevent the block from rolling.

Tactics: If the gargoyles go unnoticed, they surprise the party. Crystal gargoyles engage the characters directly while the rock hurlers remain aloft and hurl stones.

4 Gargoyle Rock Hurlers	**Level 11 Artillery**
Medium elemental humanoid (earth)	XP 600 each
HP 87; **Bloodied** 43	**Initiative** +9
AC 25, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 19	**Perception** +13
Speed 6, fly 8	Darkvision
Traits	
Stone Defense	
The gargoyle has resist 10 to all damage from attacks originating at least 5 squares away from it.	
Standard Actions	
Claw ✦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 8 damage.	
Hurled Stone ✦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +18 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 9 damage.	
Hail of Hurled Stone ✦ At-Will	
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +18 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 7 damage, or 2d6 + 12 against a target in the burst's origin square.	
Miss: Half damage.	
Skills Stealth +14	
Str 22 (+11) **Dex** 18 (+9) **Wis** 17 (+8)	
Con 15 (+7) **Int** 5 (+2) **Cha** 17 (+8)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Primordial	
Equipment 10 stones	

8 Crystal Gargoyles	Level 14 Minion Soldier
Medium elemental humanoid (earth)	XP 250 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +15	
AC 30, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 25	**Perception** +10
Speed 6, fly 8	
Immune petrification	
Traits	
Cruel Claws	
An enemy that willingly leaves a square adjacent to the gargoyle takes 5 damage.	
Translucent	
The gargoyle gains a +5 bonus to Stealth checks.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC	
Hit: 11 damage.	
Skills Stealth +23	
Str 18 (+11) **Dex** 23 (+13) **Wis** 16 (+10)	
Con 19 (+11) **Int** 6 (+5) **Cha** 11 (+7)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Primordial	

10. Stalagmite Forest

Combat Encounter Level 16 (7,200 XP)

This unlit cavern has a 40-foot ceiling lined with stalactites and an uneven floor covered with stalagmites. The cavern stretches southward to area 11.

Light: None.

Monsters: 2 crag ropers, 2 stone giant cavestalkers.

When the characters explore this area, read:

This cavern contains a veritable forest of stalagmites, and the high ceiling is a thicket of stalactites.

While expanding the warrens, the stone giants broke into this natural cavern and left it mostly intact, adding side caves as living quarters (areas 10B and 10C). They also reached an agreement with the ropers, the cavern's original occupants. Under the terms of the deal, the stone giants make sure the ropers are well fed, and the ropers guard the cavern against interlopers.

10A. Sinister Stalagmites: These rock formations range from 10 to 15 feet high. Two of the stalagmites in this section of the cavern are actually ropers.

Treasure: A *horned helm* (or another level 16 uncommon magic item) lies near the base of the southernmost roper.

10B-10C. Cavestalker Lairs: These dark side caves have 30-foot-high ceilings and smooth floors. They are home to a pair of cavestalkers—stone giants that have adapted to subterranean life and gained darkvision. Arnak has charged them with guarding the larger cavern and preventing intruders from reaching his throne room.

Treasure: Each cavestalker carries three gems (1,000 gp each) and three lightning geodes.

Tactics: The ropers prefer to wait for their enemies to blunder between them before attacking, at which point they use *double attack* and *reel*. They use *bite* against adjacent enemies.

The stone giants lurk in their side caves, using *stone shade* to gain concealment while hurling rocks and lightning geodes at enemies. Throwing a geode works the same as *hurl rock* except that the geode also explodes when it lands, making the following secondary attack: Close burst 1; +17 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 7 lightning damage.

2 Crag Ropers	Level 15 Elite Soldier
Large elemental magical beast (earth)	XP 2,400 each
HP 304; **Bloodied** 152	**Initiative** +10
AC 31, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 26	**Perception** +11
Speed 2, climb 2 (spider climb)	Darkvision
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1	
Traits	
☼ **Lashing Tentacles** ✦ **Aura** 5	
Any enemy that enters the aura or starts its turn there is marked by the roper until it is no longer in the aura. Enemies marked by the roper cannot be marked by other creatures while the enemies are in the aura.	
Stony Body	
The roper can retract its tentacles and close its eye and mouth to resemble a natural rock formation. While the roper is on a horizontal rock surface, a creature must succeed on a DC 30 Perception check to see through the roper's disguise.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Tentacle** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 10 (one creature); +18 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d8 + 11 damage, and the roper grabs the target (escape DC 22).	
⸸ **Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The roper uses *tentacle* twice.	
⸸ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature grabbed by the roper); +20 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d12 + 18 damage.	
Miss: Half damage.	
Minor Actions	
⸸ **Reel** ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)	
Attack: Melee 10 (each creature grabbed by the roper); +20 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The roper pulls the target up to 5 squares.	
Triggered Actions	
⸸ **Tentacle Retaliation** ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy marked by the roper makes an attack that doesn't include it as a target.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The roper uses *tentacle* against the triggering enemy.	
Skills Stealth +13	
Str 22 (+13) **Dex** 12 (+8) **Wis** 18 (+11)	
Con 24 (+14) **Int** 14 (+9) **Cha** 9 (+6)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Primordial	

2 Stone Giant Cavestalkers	Level 15 Artillery
Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant)	XP 1,200 each
HP 116; **Bloodied** 58	**Initiative** +12
AC 29, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 27	**Perception** +15
Speed 8 (earth walk), climb 4	Darkvision
Immune petrification	
Traits	
Stone Shade	
The giant gains partial concealment against enemies 5 or more squares away from it.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Spear** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +20 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 10 damage.	
Hurl Rock ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +22 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 13 damage.	
Stone Burst (zone) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied	
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +20 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d10 + 13 damage, and the target falls prone.	
Effect: The burst creates a zone of difficult terrain that lasts until the end of the encounter. Creatures that have earth walk ignore this difficult terrain.	
Triggered Actions	
Stone Bones ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: The giant is hit by an attack.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The giant gains resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.	
Skills Athletics +18, Dungeoneering +15, Stealth +17	
Str 22 (+13) **Dex** 20 (+12) **Wis** 16 (+10)	
Con 20 (+12) **Int** 12 (+8) **Cha** 13 (+8)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Giant, Primordial	
Equipment spear, 6 rocks	

11. Tordazahd's Ledge

Combat Encounter Level 13 (4,800 XP)

Before his madness, Arnak was famous for his diplomacy. In addition to forging alliances and partnerships with a shattered colossus (area 5), an adamantine dragon (area 7), a gang of gargoyles (area 9), and a pair of ropers (area 10), Arnak has convinced an earth titan named Tordazahd to live in the warrens.

Light: Bright (torches).

Monsters: Tordazahd (earth titan), 2 earth archon ground ragers.

Other Creatures: 10 dwarf masons (petrified).

If the characters approach from 10D, read:

A 10-foot-high ledge crosses the cavern up ahead. Several stalagmites in front of it have been sheared off, leaving rocky stumps. Beds of stone spikes jut from the floor along the foot of the ledge. A wide, rough-hewn staircase leads up to the ledge.

If the characters approach from 11B, read:

The tunnel opens onto a 10-foot-high ledge that spans a great cavern and ends just before another tunnel on the far side. To your right, the cavern floor below has been cleared of stalagmites, leaving only stumps. To your left, the cavern below is full of lifelike dwarf statues. Rough-hewn stairs lead down to the cavern floor on either side of the ledge, and beds of rocky spikes jut from the floor along the foot of the ledge.

If the characters approach from 11C, read:

The tunnel opens into a cavern filled with lifelike dwarf statues in various poses. A gap in the south wall reveals an even larger cavern beyond. To the north, a 10-foot-high ledge crosses the cavern. Beds of rocky spikes erupt from the floor along the foot of the ledge.

Regardless of how the characters approach, read:

Three creatures stand on the ledge. One is a 20-foot-tall, 15-foot-wide humanoid hulk that has rocky skin, a heavy brow, and enormous fists. Next to the titan stand two human-sized creatures of earth and rock. They wear chainmail.

The cavern ceiling is 40 feet high.

11A. Sawed-Off Stalagmites: The stone giants have sheared off several stalagmites, so that Tordazahd has clear line of sight to approaching intruders. These squares are difficult terrain.

11B. Ledge: This 10-foot-high stone ledge cuts across the cavern, with rough-hewn staircases on either side leading up to it. The stairs are difficult terrain for those ascending them.

Rock Piles: An earth titan within 3 squares of one of these piles can use it for additional ammunition for rock hurling. A rock pile is difficult terrain.

Spikes: Squares at the foot of the ledge are filled with stone spikes and are difficult terrain. Any creature knocked off the ledge into one of these squares takes 2d10 damage from the fall.

11C. Petrified Dwarves: This gallery contains ten petrified dwarves. The petrified dwarves are difficult terrain, and the statues can provide cover.

The dwarves are a company of masons hired by Thane Arnak to adorn the walls of his throne room (area 14) with bas-reliefs. When the thane began acting strangely, the dwarves threatened to leave, so Arnak had his gorgon petrify them. The statues were later moved here, creating a gallery and a warning about the folly of displeasing Arnak. The dwarves can be restored to flesh using gorgonbane, a rare mold cultivated in area 13C.

Treasure: Tordazahd has ten 1,000-gp gems embedded in its rocky skin.

Tactics: The earth titan stands on the ledge with a ready supply of rocks. It uses *slam* (and *double attack* whenever possible) against enemies within its reach. Tordazahd uses *earth shock* if it can target two or more enemies without hitting any of its allies.

The earth archons have auras that reduce the speed of their enemies, and they use *ground eruption* and *raging earth* to keep foes from closing to melee range. If the opportunity presents itself, an archon uses *shove* to knock an enemy off the ledge and into a bed of rocky spikes.

Petrified Dwarves

If the characters help Danica Stonesong restore her fellow dwarves to flesh and blood, they gain a minor quest reward (see area 2). This reward is not contingent on the dwarves making it out of the warrens alive. After the dwarves are freed from their petrified state, they insist on helping the characters in some fashion, heedless of their own well-being. Their leader is a stubbornly loyal dwarf named Tarn.

Danica can be influenced to discourage Tarn and his fellow stone crafters from tagging along with the party. Otherwise, the dwarves are nearly impossible to turn away until five or more of them are slain.

Earth Titan **Level 16 Elite Brute**
Huge elemental humanoid (earth, giant) XP 2,800

HP 384; **Bloodied** 192 **Initiative** +7
AC 30, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 26 **Perception** +9
Speed 6
Immune petrification
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Standard Actions
Slam ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 4d10 + 8 damage.
Double Attack ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The titan uses *slam* twice.
Hurl Rock ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 10 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).
Earth Shock ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +19 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d12 + 6 damage, and the target is stunned until the end of the titan's next turn.
Miss: Half damage.

Skills Athletics +19
Str 23 (+14) **Dex** 8 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+9)
Con 22 (+14) **Int** 10 (+8) **Cha** 13 (+9)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Giant, Primordial
Equipment 5 rocks

2 Earth Archon Ground Ragers **Level 14 Controller**
Medium elemental humanoid (earth) XP 1,000 each

HP 143; **Bloodied** 71 **Initiative** +9
AC 28, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 26 **Perception** +13
Speed 6 (earth walk) Tremorsense 20
Immune disease, petrification, poison

Traits
Earth Liquefaction ✦ **Aura** 5
Any creature that ends its turn in the aura without moving during its turn is slowed until the end of its next turn. Earth creatures are immune.

Standard Actions
Slam ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 13 damage.
Raging Earth (thunder) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +18 vs. Reflex (+20 against a slowed target)
Hit: 1d10 + 13 thunder damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).
Shove ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 11 damage, the earth archon pushes the target up to 4 squares, and the target falls prone.
Ground Eruption (thunder) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +18 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d8 + 15 damage, and the target falls prone.
Miss: Half damage, and the target falls prone.

Str 20 (+12) **Dex** 14 (+9) **Wis** 23 (+13)
Con 23 (+13) **Int** 19 (+11) **Cha** 17 (+10)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Primordial
Equipment chainmail

10 Dwarf Masons **Level 15 Minion Brute**
Medium natural humanoid

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +7
AC 27, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 26 **Perception** +9
Speed 5 Low-light vision

Traits
Stand the Ground
The dwarf can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.
Steady-Footed
The dwarf can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.

Standard Actions
Pick (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
Hit: 14 damage, or 18 damage on a critical hit.

Str 12 (+8) **Dex** 10 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+9)
Con 16 (+10) **Int** 13 (+8) **Cha** 10 (+7)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Giant
Equipment pick

12. Cavern of Scrying Crystals

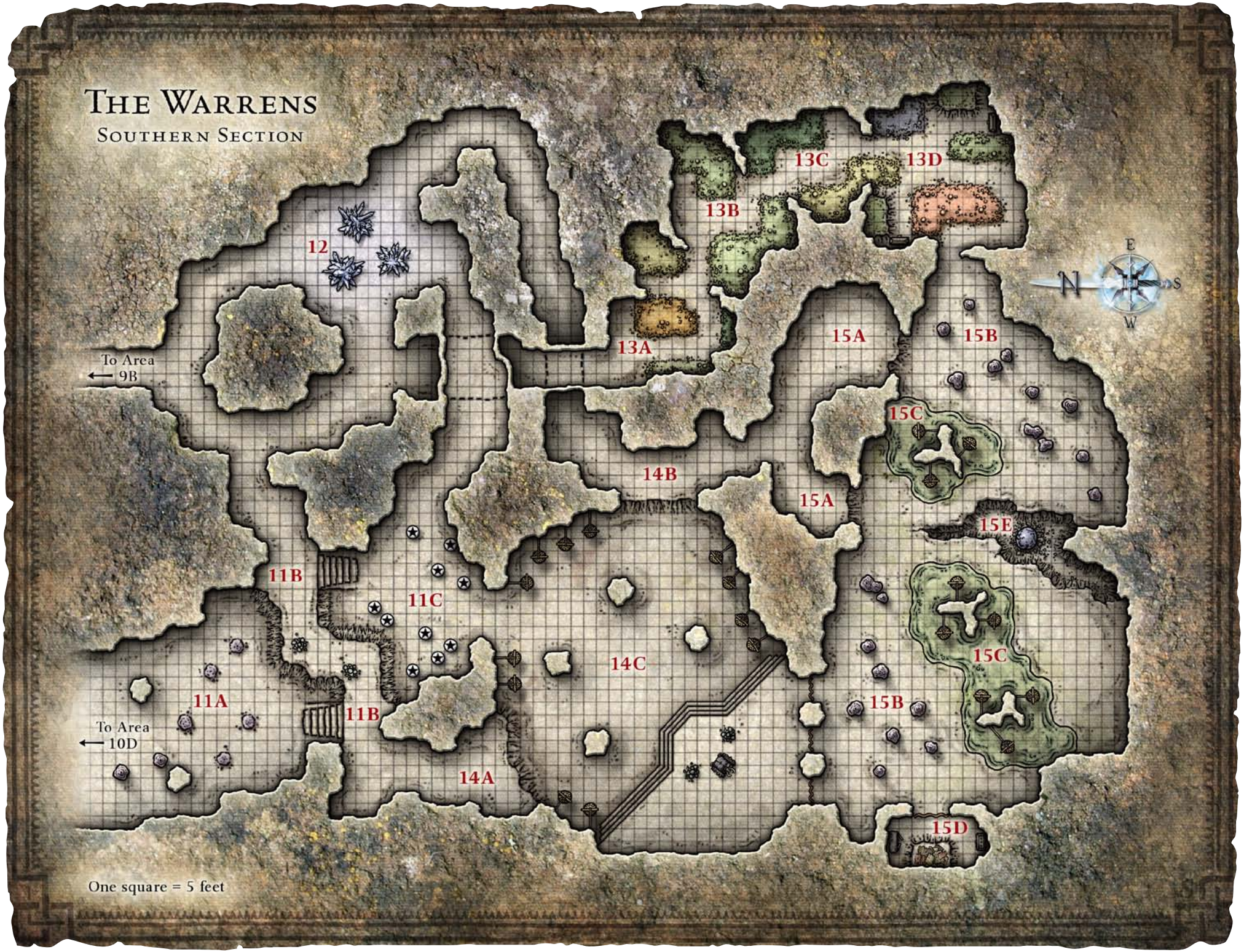
Combat Encounter Level 15 (6,200 XP)

Three glowing crystal formations sprout from the floor of this cavern. The crystals are imbued with a curious property that allows them to be used as scrying devices. At present, a human noble and diplomat named Merlian is using the crystals to acquire information that might benefit him and the giants.

Light: Bright (scrying crystals and torches).

Monsters: Merlian Saar, Dimiri and Vadya (tenebrous assassins), Naliak and Otoru (goliath king's guards).

If the characters attempt to approach the cave quietly, have them make a group Stealth check (DC 22). If the check succeeds, the characters can move close enough to overhear Merlian Saar say the following in Common:


The Warrens
Southern Section
13C
13D
13B
12
13A
15A
15B
15C
14B
15A
15E
11B
11C
14C
15C
11A
11B
15B
14A
15D
To Area
9B
To Area
10D
One square = 5 feet
N
E
S
W

"It's well enough to watch these imbeciles bumble about, but I want to hear what they're saying! Look at him, the hapless swine. Like a few barricaded doors and armored dullards will save him. Hold a moment . . . this is interesting. Ah, so that's where he keeps all that money he inherited! Surprisingly clever . . ."

When the characters first see the cavern, read:
Three large crystal formations rise naturally from the floor and bathe this 30-foot-high cavern in pale blue light. Each formation consists of a mound of rock from which clusters of translucent crystals thrust upward at odd angles, some as high as 20 feet. In the crystalline facets of one formation, you see distorted images of a distant place mingled with unfamiliar faces.

A human male stands before the images, one hand pressed against a crystal facet. Nearby stand his guards—two human women in chainmail and two male goliaths in hide armor.

Merlian Saar came to negotiate a truce with Thane Arnak. Instead, Belastraya convinced the noble to use the crystals in this cave to gather intelligence on the giants' enemies so that she could plan her raids accordingly. Merlian seized the opportunity to use the scrying crystals to spy on his rivals. Currently, he is spying on a human noble named Veerzon Tandro—someone of no real consequence to the characters or the giants (unless you use Tandro as a hook for future adventures).

Saar's attendants are loyal to Merlian and no one else. They think nothing of his betrayal of those who sent the peace delegation.

The goliaths, former members of the Kaluliak tribe in the Crystalmist Mountains, were exiled for dishonesty. They have no scruples and joined forces with Merlian for coin. They hope the corrupt noble will persuade Belastraya to launch an attack against the Kaluliak tribe.

Scrying Crystals: These 20-foot-high crystal formations are blocking terrain. Any creature adjacent to a crystal formation feels inspired and gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls and saving throws.

If someone touches a crystal formation while thinking about a specific creature that he or she has met, the crystal acts as a scrying device. The scryer can watch the specified creature for as long as he or she remains in physical contact with the crystal. Images in the crystal are distorted but still allow the scryer to ascertain details. The crystal does not project sound.

A creature can be observed only if it is within one hundred miles of the crystal and is of a lower level than the scryer. Otherwise, the crystal displays nothing. Multiple creatures can use a scrying crystal simultaneously. Each crystal has plenty of facets to reflect multiple images.

Tactics: Merlian and his cohorts do not attack the characters immediately; the noble prefers to find out who they are and what they want. If he thinks the characters are after him, he tries to discern how much damage they've done to Thane Arnak's forces and fool them into "rescuing" him or letting him go.

If combat occurs, Merlian uses *urge hesitation*, and he and his allies try to remain adjacent to the crystal formations. Merlian shuns melee combat and prefers to use his various burst powers. One of Merlian's goliath guards always remains adjacent to him, but both guards prefer standing near the noble. The goliaths use their reach and halberds to keep enemies away from Merlian. One uses *stone's endurance* immediately, and the other uses it once bloodied. Merlian's assassins focus on ranged attackers or those who try to lock the noble down in melee combat.

Development

The characters gain a minor quest XP reward for obtaining proof of Merlian's treachery (see "Quests," page 2). Capturing one or more of the villains and delivering them to the authorities fulfills the quest because the captives can be made to talk. Another option is to return with a corpse or a severed head so that priests can perform a Speak with Dead ritual and learn the truth.

Merlian Saar, Corrupt Noble	**Level 16 Controller (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 1,400
HP 153; **Bloodied** 76	**Initiative** +9
AC 30, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 29	**Perception** +9
Speed 5	
Traits	
☼ **Unpredictable Flanker ✦ Aura** 1	
Any enemy in the aura grants combat advantage.	
Protection	
Merlian gains a +2 bonus to all defenses while adjacent to an ally.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Longsword** (weapon) **✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d8 + 11 damage, and Merlian can slide the target 1 square.	
⚔ **Appoint Champion ✦ At-Will**	
Effect: Close burst 10 (one ally in the burst); the target can make an at-will attack, shifting up to half its speed before or after the attack, as a free action.	
⚔ **Inspirational Authority ✦ Recharge** when first bloodied	
Effect: Close burst 10 (one ally in the burst); the target recharges a recharge power or an encounter power and uses it as a free action.	
Minor Actions	
⚔ **Urge Hesitation** (charm) **✦ Encounter**	
Attack: Close burst 5 (enemies in the burst); +19 vs. Will	
Hit: The target cannot use a standard action during its next turn.	
Skills Bluff +18, Diplomacy +18, Insight +14	
Str 11 (+8) **Dex** 12 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+9)	
Con 17 (+11) **Int** 18 (+12) **Cha** 20 (+13)	
Alignment evil	**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven, Giant
Equipment chainmail, longsword	

2 Tenebrous Assassins	Level 14 Skirmisher
Medium shadow humanoid, human	XP 1,000 each
HP 138; **Bloodied** 69	**Initiative** +15
AC 26, **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 26	**Perception** +13
Speed 6	Darkvision

Traits

Unerring Focus

The assassin never takes penalties to attack rolls it makes against its prey. If the assassin takes radiant damage, this trait no longer functions (save ends).

Standard Actions

⊕ **Kukri** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 13 damage, or 3d6 + 13 if the target is the assassin's prey.

⸸ **Sunder from Sight** (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 13 damage, or 3d6 + 13 if the target is the assassin's prey.

Effect: The target takes ongoing 5 damage, and it cannot be seen or targeted by its allies (save ends both).

Minor Actions

Shadow Prey ✦ **At-Will**

Effect: Ranged sight (one creature). The assassin designates the target as its prey until the assassin designates another target or until the end of the encounter.

Triggered Actions

Shadow Leap (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**

Trigger: An enemy other than the assassin's prey attacks the assassin.

Effect (Immediate Reaction): The assassin teleports up to 6 squares to a square adjacent to its prey.

Skills Acrobatics +18, Athletics +12, Stealth +18

Str 11 (+7)	**Dex** 22 (+13)	**Wis** 12 (+8)
Con 18 (+11)	**Int** 11 (+7)	**Cha** 20 (+12)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common

Equipment leather armor, 2 kukris

2 Goliath King's Guards	Level 16 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 1,400 each
HP 154; **Bloodied** 77	**Initiative** +15
AC 32, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 27	**Perception** +17
Speed 6	

Traits

Threatening Reach

The guard can make opportunity attacks against enemies within 2 squares of it.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Halberd** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +21 vs. AC

Hit: 4d10 + 2 damage, and the guard slides the target 1 square and marks it until the end of the guard's next turn.

⸸ **Mighty Clout** (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +19 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 4d10 + 14 damage, and the guard slides the target 1 square and knocks it prone.

Minor Actions

Stone's Endurance ✦ **Encounter**

Effect: The guard gains resist 10 to all damage until the end of its next turn.

Skills Athletics +20, Intimidate +15

Str 25 (+15)	**Dex** 21 (+13)	**Wis** 19 (+12)
Con 18 (+12)	**Int** 13 (+9)	**Cha** 15 (+10)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Giant

Equipment scale armor, halberd

13. Fungi Cavern

Combat Encounter Level 16 (7,750 XP) plus 1,200 for trap

This cavern has ribbed walls and contains a riot of fungi. Some of the mushrooms grow to heights of 6 feet or more, and mosslike mold spreads across the walls and floor in thick carpets. The cave's dampness contributes to the growth of this fungi garden, which is tended by a pair of fungi-encrusted stone giants. The cavern slopes down toward the south.

Light: Dim (fireflies and glowing fungus).

Monsters: Shoggo, Zorsa, 1 knell beetle, 2 carrion crawler hatchling swarms, 3 doom shriekers, 4 death-cap stranglers.

Trap: Living fungus chest.

When the characters reach area 13A, read:

The tunnel widens to form a 40-foot-high ribbed cavern that slopes gently downward toward the south. A riot of fungi fills the cavern. Colorful glowing fungi grow on the walls, and heaps of refuse have given birth to towering mushrooms, broad toadstools, and carpets of thick, mosslike mold. Tiny cave crickets and beetles skitter around the garden, and fireflies flit about in great numbers.

When the characters see Shoggo and the beetle, add:

Two creatures advance through the forest of fungi. The first is a hunched male stone giant that wields a moldy great-club, carries a bulky sack, and wears a curtain of black mold as a cloak. Various breeds of fungus grow on his head, face, arms, and shoulders. Next to him is an enormous beetle with wicked mandibles and a large, bell-shaped protrusion on its head.

When the characters see Zorsa and her swarms, add:

This female stone giant wields a glaive. Her flesh is encrusted with fungus, and she wears a breastplate and greaves made of insect chitin. The floor around her writhes with swarms of green worms that look like tiny carrion crawlers.

Shoggo spends practically every waking hour tending this garden and takes great offense when someone damages his crops. Zorsa lingers at the south end of the cave, helping Shoggo here and there while looking after her carrion crawler hatchlings, which are confined to crates at the start of the encounter. At the first sign of trouble, Zorsa releases the swarms (two minor actions) and lets them gather around her.

13A. Shriekers and Stranglers: This section of the cavern is home to hostile forms of fungus: doom shriekers and deathcap stranglers. Doom shriekers are oversized mushrooms that emit a piercing shriek whenever non-plant creatures come within 5 squares of them. Deathcap stranglers, typically found in the Shadowdark, are slender, 6-foot-tall mushrooms that look decayed. Vinelike tendrils wrapped around their stalks lash out at prey that gets too close. A beneficial black mold called deathwort grows in patches on the floor. See the "Fungi Garden" sidebar for details about this fungus and the others mentioned below.

The knell beetle and the smaller vermin trigger the shriekers often while roaming about the cavern, so the warrens' other occupants are trained to ignore the shrieks.

13B. Spore Bombs: Among the mosses, molds, and mushrooms in this section of the cave grow two clusters of spore bombs, which the stone giants use as missile weapons.

13C. Gorgonbane: One wall in this section of the cavern is home to a colony of gorgonbane, a mold that can restore petrified creatures to flesh. Characters can harvest enough gorgonbane to restore twelve petrified creatures to flesh.

13D. Living Quarters: Shoggo and Zorsa sleep atop 5-foot-high mold-covered ledges hidden behind gardens of mushrooms. Characters who scour the fungi gardens can harvest five dragonheart pods, which grant temporary hit points when consumed.

Each stone giant has an unlocked chest. Shoggo's chest (in the northwest corner) is actually a living fungus shaped like a chest. It is trapped and contains a +4 *vicious greataxe* (or another level 17 common magic item), 500 gp in a hollow brown gourd, and various mundane items (see "Treasure," page 3). Zorsa's chest (in the southeast corner) is made of rotting wood. It holds an ebony harp with golden strings (2,500 gp), a gold-framed mirror (2,500 gp), three 1,000 gp gems, and various mundane items (see "Treasure," page 3).

Tactics: Shoggo hurls spore bombs until pressed into melee combat, at which point he uses *moldy greatclub* to batter enemies. He uses *spore cloud* only when he can catch multiple enemies at once.

Zorsa uses *beast mastery* every turn to maneuver her swarms or the beetle. She hurls rocks at distant enemies, uses nets to restrain closer foes, and pushes enemies with her glaive if they're too close for comfort.

The knell beetle knows better than to catch Shoggo or Zorsa with *sonic knell*, so it uses that power cautiously and otherwise uses *bite*. When it dies, it uses *death knell*. The beetle tries to stay out of range of the shriekers and the deathcap stranglers.

The carrion crawler hatchlings swarm the nearest enemy, moving and attacking as directed by Zorsa.

The shriekers and the deathcap stranglers ignore Shoggo and Zorsa.

Shoggo, Stone Giant Gardener — **Level 15 Controller**

Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant) — XP 1,200

HP 150; **Bloodied** 75 — **Initiative** +10
AC 29, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 27 — **Perception** +12
Speed 8 (earth walk) — Low-light vision
Immune petrification; **Resist** 10 poison

Traits

Plant Affinity
Shoggo is considered to be a plant whenever it benefits him.

Standard Actions

Moldy Greatclub (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 10 damage, and Shoggo slides the target up to 3 squares.

Spore Bomb (poison, zone) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +18 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 10 poison damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of Shoggo's next turn. Any creature that ends its turn in the zone takes 10 poison damage.

Spore Cloud (poison) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close burst 1 (creatures in the burst); +18 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d6 + 12 poison damage, and the target is slowed and weakened (save ends both).

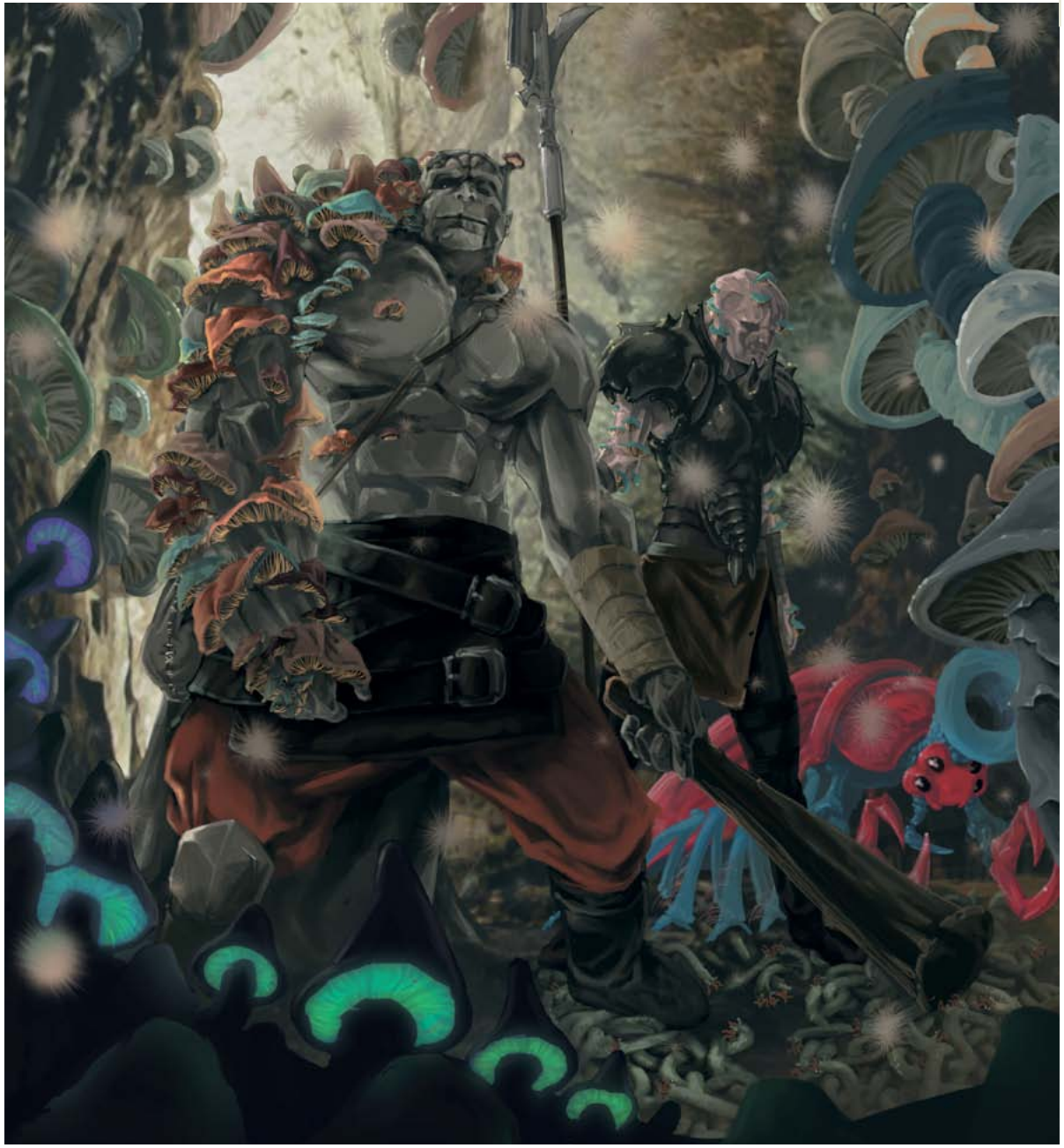
Triggered Actions

Stone Bones ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: Shoggo is hit by an attack.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): Shoggo gains resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.

Skills Athletics +18, Dungeoneering +17, Nature +17, Stealth +15

Str 23 (+13)	**Dex** 16 (+10)	**Wis** 20 (+12)
Con 22 (+13)	**Int** 12 (+8)	**Cha** 11 (+7)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Giant
Equipment mold cloak, moldy greatclub, 5 spore bombs



FUNGI GARDEN

Shoggo grows and harvests hundreds of species of fungus. Only a few, have properties beyond being edible. The benefit or qualities of a particular fungus can be ascertained with a DC 20 Dungeoneering check or Nature check.

Deathwort (Area 13A): This soft black mold grows in small patches on the floor. Eating a patch of deathwort moss (a standard action) grants a +1 item bonus to death saving throws for 24 hours.

Spore Bombs (Area 13B): These prickly yellow orbs grow in clusters on the floor. A cluster includes 1d4 spore bombs. A spore bomb can be hurled as a standard action: Area burst 1 within 5; +17 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 5 poison damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). The exploding bomb also creates a zone that lasts until the end of the thrower's next turn. Any creature that ends its turn in the zone takes 10 poison damage.

Gorgonbane (Area 13C): This phosphorescent green mold grows on damp walls. When the mold is applied to a petrified creature (a standard action), it restores the creature to flesh after 5 minutes.

Dragonheart Pods (Area 13D): These red, fleshy, heart-shaped seedpods can be plucked from underneath the cap of a 7-foot-tall orange mushroom covered with yellow hornlike protrusions. Any creature that eats a dragonheart pod (a standard action) gains 10 temporary hit points that last for 24 hours.

Zorsa, Stone Giant Tamer — **Level 15 Controller (Leader)**
Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant) — XP 1,200

HP 148; **Bloodied** 74 — **Initiative** +11
AC 29, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 27 — **Perception** +13
Speed 8 (earth walk) — Low-light vision
Immune petrification; **Resist** 10 poison

Traits

Plant Affinity
Zorsa is considered to be a plant whenever it benefits her.

Standard Actions

Glaive (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 12 damage, and the target falls prone.

Beast Mastery ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Close burst 10 (one allied beast in the burst); the target shifts up to half its speed and makes a basic attack as a free action.

Attraction Spores (charm) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +18 vs. Will
Hit: The target is dominated (save ends).

Minor Actions

Hurl Net ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Attack: Area burst 1 within 5 (creatures in the burst); +18 vs. Reflex
Hit: The target is restrained (save ends).

Triggered Actions

Stone Bones ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: Zorsa is hit by an attack.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): Zorsa gains resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.

Skills Athletics +17, Dungeoneering +18, Nature +18, Stealth +16
Str 21 (+12) **Dex** 18 (+11) **Wis** 22 (+13)
Con 20 (+12) **Int** 12 (+8) **Cha** 11 (+7)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Giant
Equipment chitin breastplate, fungus cloak, glaive, 3 nets

Knell Beetle — **Level 15 Brute**
Large natural beast — XP 1,200

HP 183; **Bloodied** 91 — **Initiative** +10
AC 27, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 27 — **Perception** +12
Speed 6, climb 6 — Darkvision

Standard Actions

Bite ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
Hit: 3d10 + 12 damage.

Sonic Knell (thunder) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +18 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + 11 thunder damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Triggered Actions

Death Knell ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: The beetle drops to 0 hit points.
Effect (No Action): The beetle uses *sonic knell*.

Str 20 (+12) **Dex** 16 (+10) **Wis** 20 (+12)
Con 23 (+13) **Int** 1 (+2) **Cha** 7 (+5)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

4 Deathcap Stranglers — **Level 14 Minion Soldier**
Medium shadow beast (blind, plant) — XP 250 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +8
AC 30, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 26 — **Perception** +7
Speed 1, climb 1 — Blindsight 5
Immune blinded, gaze, illusion, necrotic, poison

Traits

Spore Shroud (necrotic) ✦ **Aura** 1
Any enemy that willingly leaves the aura takes 5 necrotic damage.

Plant Form
Until the deathcap takes an action, a creature must succeed on a DC 29 Dungeoneering check to recognize the deathcap as a creature.

Standard Actions

Grasping Tendril (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 5 (one creature); +17 vs. Reflex
Hit: 11 necrotic damage, and the deathcap pulls the target into a square adjacent to it.

Str 14 (+9) **Dex** 9 (+6) **Wis** 10 (+7)
Con 15 (+9) **Int** 1 (+2) **Cha** 1 (+2)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

2 Carrion Crawler Hatchling Swarms — **Level 15 Soldier**
Medium aberrant beast (swarm) — XP 1,200 each

HP 145; **Bloodied** 77 — **Initiative** +9
AC 31, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 25 — **Perception** +6
Speed 6, climb 6 — Darkvision
Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks; **Vulnerable** 10 to close and area attacks

Traits

Swarm Attack (poison) ✦ **Aura** 1
Any enemy that starts its turn in the aura takes 10 poison damage.

Swarm
The swarm can occupy the same space as another creature, and an enemy can enter its space, which is difficult terrain. The swarm cannot be pulled, pushed, or slid by melee or ranged attacks. It can squeeze through any opening that is large enough for at least one of the creatures it comprises.

Standard Actions

Tentacle Swarm (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +18 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 10 poison damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Str 7 (+5) **Dex** 11 (+7) **Wis** 9 (+6)
Con 17 (+10) **Int** 1 (+2) **Cha** 11 (+7)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

3 Doom Shriekers	Level 14 Minion Lurker
Medium natural beast (blind, plant)	XP 250 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +8
AC 28, **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 23 **Perception** +7
Speed 1 Blindsight 5
Immune blinded, gaze, illusion, poison

Traits

Plant Form
Until the shrieker takes an action, a creature must succeed on a DC 29 Dungeoneering check to recognize the shrieker as a creature.

Standard Actions

Piercing Shriek (thunder) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Close burst 5 (creatures in the burst); +17 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 5 thunder damage.

Triggered Actions

Shrieking ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: A creature without the plant keyword ends its turn within 5 squares of the shrieker.
Effect (Free Action): The shrieker emits a loud shriek that can be heard by all nondeafened creatures within 20 squares of it.

Str 4 (+4)	**Dex** 5 (+4)	**Wis** 10 (+7)
Con 13 (+8)	**Int** 1 (+2)	**Cha** 1 (+2)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Living Fungus Chest	Level 15 Lurker
Trap	XP 1,200

Detect automatic **Initiative** –
HP 40
AC 15, **Fortitude** 10, **Reflex** 5, **Will** –

Dungeoneering or Nature
DC 22: The character thinks that the chest might release a burst of spores if opened improperly or smashed open. The character also realizes that the chest has rooted itself to the ground and can't be moved without smashing it.
DC 30: The character knows that plant creatures can open the chest safely and that the chest can be "tricked" open using Dungeoneering or Nature.

Triggered Actions

Cloud of Spores (poison) ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: The chest is destroyed, or a non-plant creature opens it.
Attack: Close burst 3 (non-plant creatures in the burst); +18 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d12 + 10 poison damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Countermeasures

✦ **Trick:** Dungeoneering or Nature (trained only) DC 30. *Success:* The chest can be opened without triggering the *cloud of spores*. *Failure (25 or lower):* The trap triggers.

14. The Mad Thane

Combat Encounter Level 17 (8,550 XP)

Arnak spends nearly all his time here, seated on his crystalline throne and mumbling to himself. Contact with the Stone of Madness (see area 15) has warped the thane's mind.

When the Stone of Madness was unearthed, it attacked the most powerful creature it could sense within range. The egg-shaped stone, a vile weapon created and hidden long ago by agents of the Elder Elemental Eye (also known as Tharizdun, or the Chained God), fills Arnak's mind with horrible thoughts. As long as the stone remains intact, Arnak continues to suffer the effects of his madness.

In his insanity, Arnak believes that he is a champion of the Elder Elemental Eye, destined to lead the giants along a path of conquest. He spends his days and nights uttering bizarre incantations in Primordial, believing that his summons will echo in the minds of Tharizdun worshipers across the world. He awaits their arrival in his throne room.

Arnak can be fooled into believing that the characters are agents of the Chained God, but he can't be reasoned with until the Stone of Madness is destroyed.

Light: Bright (torches).

Monsters: Arnak, 5+ galeb duhr rockspawn, Thundergore (steel gorgon), 2 medusa spirit charmers.

Other Creatures: 12 caged prisoners.

When the characters can see area 14C, read:
Four rocky pillars support the domed ceiling of this torchlit cavern, which is overlooked by two 20-foot-high ledges. The walls are carved with half-finished murals of stone giants engaged in running, hunting, rock hurling, dancing, and so forth. Along the walls, numerous dangling wooden cages are held aloft by ropes and stone pulleys. Each cage contains a starved prisoner. Thin arms grope through wooden

bars, clawing at the air in desperation, but none of the prisoners cries out or speaks.

Stone steps lead up to a raised section of the floor, atop which sits a giant-sized throne of smoky black crystal. A large stone giant in a sleeveless golden coat of scales sits on the throne, staring directly ahead. Blasphemous runes are carved into his stony flesh.

Two human-sized females flank the throne. They wear black robes covered with jagged crimson spirals, and their eyes glow beneath black cowls.

A greatclub fashioned from a dragon's leg bone leans next to the throne. Behind the throne paces a giant metal-plated bull, greenish gas wafting from its nostrils.

If the characters request an audience, read:
The gravel-voiced giant replies, "I am the champion of the Elder Elemental Eye. No longer do I sleep. No longer do I dream. I awaken to the distant voices of those who come. In this place, blood will be spilled. Do you heed the summons of the Elder Elemental Eye? Have you come to worship and pledge your undying allegiance to the Chained God?"

If the characters claim to worship the Elder Elemental Eye, Arnak demands proof. If they display a holy symbol of Tharizdun or otherwise produce proof or convince the thane, Arnak says:

"You are welcome here. Stay and do as you will. Others will be arriving soon."

Unless the characters are hostile or they attempt to free the prisoners, Arnak lets them move about freely. He does not engage them in further conversation and instead begins uttering cryptic incantations in Primordial.

If the characters cannot convince Arnak that they worship the Elder Elemental Eye, he rises from the throne and attacks them, saying:

"You will make excellent sacrifices."

14A-14B. Ledges: These 20-foot-high ledges overlook the throne room (area 14C).

14C. Throne Room: Arnak broods here, keeping prisoners in his cages until the time comes to sacrifice them to the Elder Elemental Eye.

Dangling Cages: Each wooden cage is 6 feet tall and 4 feet wide. All the cages are suspended 15 feet above the floor and rigged to ropes and stone pulleys that allow them to be raised and lowered. Each cage is attached to a rope that is tied off to a stone hook set into the nearest wall at a height of 8 feet. One can lower a cage by untying its rope or cutting the rope (either one is a standard action). The cages are not locked.

The prisoners are humans, dwarves, elves, and other humanoids taken from farms and settlements during giant raids. Consider them 1st-level minions with AC 14, other defenses 12, and no effective attacks. Due to exhaustion and lack of nourishment, they are slowed and weakened until they take an extended rest in comfortable surroundings.

Throne: Arnak's black crystal throne is fused to the floor and cannot be moved. It is difficult terrain. Any creature in direct contact with the throne can spend a healing surge as a minor action once per round to regain 25 hit points. If the creature doing so has the elemental origin, it regains 30 hit points. The power of the throne can be used no more than three times per day.

Pillars: These rough-hewn pillars are blocking terrain.

Rock Piles: If Arnak is within 2 squares of one of these piles, he can use it for ammunition for rock hurling. A rock pile is difficult terrain.

Treasure: Thane Arnak wears a sleeveless coat made of interlocking golden scales (5,000 gp).

Tactics: In combat, Arnak prefers to hurl rocks while staying within reach of his throne. He quickly spends his action point so that he can summon more rockspawn to harry enemies. When bloodied, Arnak touches his throne to activate its healing power. He has two surges he can spend in this way.

Thundergore charges the nearest enemy and saves its *petrifying breath* for when it can catch two or more enemies in the blast.

The medusas laugh as they wade into melee. They use *serpent hair* unless they can hit two or more enemies with *spirit charm*. One medusa uses *swords to snakes* early in combat, and the other saves that power to thwart opportunity attacks later in the battle.

5 Galeb Duhr Rockspawn		**Level 16 Minion Brute**
Medium elemental humanoid (earth)		XP 350 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		**Initiative** +8
AC 28, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 25		**Perception** +11
Immune petrification, poison		
Speed 4 (earth walk), burrow 4		Tremorsense 5
Standard Actions		
⸸ **Earthspike Slam** ✦ **At-Will**		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC		
Hit: 10 damage.		
Miss: 5 damage.		
Str 23 (+14)	**Dex** 10 (+8)	**Wis** 16 (+11)
Con 19 (+12)	**Int** 12 (+9)	**Cha** 12 (+9)
Alignment unaligned	**Languages** Dwarven, Giant	

Arnak, Stone Giant Thane **Level 16 Elite Artillery (Leader)**
Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant) XP 2,800

HP 252; **Bloodied** 126 **Initiative** +12
AC 30, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 29 **Perception** +12
Speed 8 (earth walk) Low-light vision
Immune petrification
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits
Stone Roots ✦ Aura 10
Arnak and his allies in the aura cannot be knocked prone.

Standard Actions
Dragonbone Greatclub (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 4d8 + 7 damage.
Hurl Rock ✦ At-Will
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 12 damage, and the target falls prone.
Double Attack ✦ At-Will
Effect: Arnak makes two basic attacks.
Exploding Rock (thunder) **✦ Recharge** when first bloodied
Attack: Area burst 1 within 20 (creatures in the burst); +21 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + 7 damage plus 2d6 + 7 thunder damage, and the target falls prone.

Minor Actions
Call Rockspawn ✦ Encounter
Requirement: Arnak must have spent an action point during this encounter.
Effect: Close burst 10; five galeb duhr rockspawn emerge from the ground in squares in the area.

Triggered Actions
Stone Bones ✦ At-Will
Trigger: Arnak is hit by an attack.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): Arnak gains resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.

Skills Athletics +20, Diplomacy +18, Dungeoneering +12, Insight +12
Str 25 (+15) **Dex** 18 (+12) **Wis** 8 (+7)
Con 24 (+15) **Int** 14 (+10) **Cha** 20 (+13)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Giant, Primordial
Equipment golden scale armor, dragonbone greatclub

Steel Gorgon **Level 15 Elite Soldier**
Large elemental beast (earth) XP 2,400

HP 302; **Bloodied** 151 **Initiative** +12
AC 31, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 27 **Perception** +11
Speed 8 (earth walk) Truesight 5
Immune forced movement, knocked prone, petrification
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Standard Actions
Gore ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
Hit: 3d10 + 7 damage, or 4d10 + 13 if charging, and the target falls prone.
Double Attack ✦ At-Will
Effect: The gorgon uses *gore* twice.
Petrifying Breath (poison) **✦ Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +18 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 14 poison damage, and the target is dazed and slowed (save ends both).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is instead dazed and immobilized (save ends both).
Second Failed Saving Throw: The target is instead petrified.

Str 23 (+13) **Dex** 16 (+10) **Wis** 18 (+11)
Con 23 (+13) **Int** 2 (+3) **Cha** 7 (+5)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

2 Medusa Spirit Charmers **Level 13 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid, female XP 800 each

HP 130; **Bloodied** 65 **Initiative** +9
AC 27, **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 27 **Perception** +14
Speed 6
Immune petrification; **Resist** 10 poison

Standard Actions
Serpent Hair (poison) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +18 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 poison damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to saving throws until the end of the medusa's next turn.
Spirit Charm (charm, psychic) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +16 vs. Will
Hit: 1d6 + 6 psychic damage, and the target must end its next turn 2 squares closer to or adjacent to the medusa or else take 3d6 psychic damage.
Swords to Snakes (fear, illusion) **✦ Encounter**
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +16 vs. Will
Hit: The target's weapons and implements appear to become snakes, and the target cannot use weapon or implement powers (save ends).

Triggered Actions
Stony Glare ✦ At-Will
Trigger: An enemy ends its turn within 2 squares of the medusa.
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close blast 2 (triggering enemy in the blast); +16 vs. Fortitude
Hit: The target is petrified (save ends).
Third Failed Saving Throw: The target is petrified until one of the following conditions is satisfied.
- ✦ The use of an appropriate power, such as *divine cleansing*.
- ✦ The willing kiss of the medusa that petrified the creature (a medusa might do this to gain information or to luxuriate in the victim's fear before returning it to stone).
- ✦ The medusa responsible for the petrification is killed and its blood is applied to the stony lips of the victim before a full day passes.

Skills Bluff +17, Stealth +14
Str 14 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 17 (+9)
Con 18 (+10) **Int** 19 (+10) **Cha** 22 (+12)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common

Development

Characters can entrust Danica Stonesong to escort any freed prisoners to safety. The captives are grateful but have nothing to offer the party as a reward. At your discretion, one of the prisoners might have important connections, and the rescue might yield a future reward or an adventure hook.

15. The Stone of Madness

Skill Challenge Level 15 (6,000 XP)

The stone giants found this natural cavern while expanding the warrens. However, further excavation yielded an unfortunate discovery—the *Ghal-Thrad*, the Stone of Madness. It is a large, purple, egg-shaped rock that has remained buried for centuries. Worshipers of the Elder Elemental Eye created the stone, and its discovery piqued Arnak's interest enough for the thane to touch it. When he did so, maddening forces bound inside the stone overwhelmed Arnak's mind.

Most of the other stone giants now live in fear of Arnak but refuse to abandon him. Although Belastraya believes that the stone has driven her brother mad, she instead proclaims that a primordial spirit has taken possession of him. She wants the stone giants to remember the might of the primordials and seize the power that has been denied them.

Light: Bright (torches).

Monsters: 4+ spectral terrors.

Other Creatures: 6 caged prisoners.

When the characters gaze into the cavern, read:
A torchlit cavern bristling with stalagmites spreads opens here. Massive columns of rock support its 50-foot-high ceiling, which is covered with stalactites. Bubbling pools of hissing liquid surround the columns and fill the cavern with an acrid stench. Dangling above these pools are wooden cages, some of which have been eaten away, as if by acid, others of which hold coughing, malnourished prisoners. Curtains conceal exits to the north and west, and 15-foot-high ledges overlook the cavern to the north. To the south, the floor plunges into a jagged pit. Four skull-faced phantoms fly above the pit, their ghostly tentacles trailing behind them.

If characters can see the Stone of Madness, read:
At the bottom of this 20-foot-deep fissure rests a large egg of smooth purple stone with black veins. Rubble surrounds it. Images reflected in the stone's polished surface are horribly deformed.

15A. Ledges: Torches set in 10-foot-high sconces illuminate these two 15-foot-high ledges overlooking the cavern. Climbing a ledge requires a DC 15 Athletics check.

15B. Stalagmites: These sections of the cavern are filled with stalagmites. These 10-foot-high rock formations are blocking terrain and provide cover. A creature can move around the corner of a stalagmite square normally.

15C. Acid Pools and Prisoners: Five-foot-deep pools of acid surround the thick columns that support the cavern ceiling. Any creature that enters an acid pool or starts its turn in a pool takes 10 acid damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

Dangling Cages: These cages, suspended 10 feet above the acid pits, are like those in area 14C. Each rope is tied off at a point that creatures with reach 2 can access; other creatures must stand in an acid pool or climb the column (Athletics DC 15) to reach the rope. The prisoners, three humans and three halflings, have statistics similar to the captives in area 14C.

15D. Arnak's Bedchamber: The thane's cave contains a stone ledge that serves as a bed, a stone wardrobe, and an unlocked chest containing his personal treasures: a suit of *+4 flamedrinker plate armor* (or another level 19 rare or uncommon magic item), a golden drinking horn studded with obsidian (5,000 gp), a bejeweled alabaster pyramid (5,000 gp), and ten 100 gp ingots stamped with the imperial emblem of an ancient and ruined dragonborn empire.

The 12-foot-tall stone wardrobe contains various articles of giant-sized clothing made of stitched animal hide as well as two large sacks of assorted mundane items (see "Treasure," page 3). The wardrobe is blocking terrain.

15E. The Ghal-Thrad: The Stone of Madness rests at the bottom of a 20-foot-deep pit (Athletics DC 15 to climb). Rubble in the pit makes its floor difficult terrain.

Tactics: The spectral terrors circle above the pit. They do not attack unless they or the Stone of Madness is attacked first. Dealing damage to the stone also alerts Arnak in area 14, if he is still alive, which causes him, his iron gorgon, and his medusas to enter the combat at the start of the third round.

When a spectral terror is destroyed, the Stone of Madness creates another one as a free action so that four always exist. A newly created spectral terror emerges from inside the stone on its initiative count and appears in a random square adjacent to the stone. Characters gain no XP for destroying spectral terrors—only for destroying the Stone of Madness (see "Skill Challenge: Destroying the Stone" below).

A spectral terror uses *psychic tentacle* to slide enemies into the acid pools. The spectral terrors protect the Stone of Madness by attacking characters who deal damage to the stone.

If Arnak and his entourage are drawn into the fray, they use tactics similar to those noted in area 14, but the thane loses his easy access to the healing power of his black crystal throne.

4 Spectral Terrors	Level 15 Minion Brute
Medium elemental animate	XP –
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +12
AC 27, **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 28	**Perception** +7
Speed 0, fly 10; phasing	Truesight 5
Immune disease, poison, psychic	
Traits	
Stone-Bound	
A terror cannot move more than 20 squares from the Stone of Madness. If forced beyond this range, it is destroyed instantly. If the Stone of Madness is destroyed, the terror is destroyed.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Psychic Tentacle** (psychic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +18 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 11 psychic damage, and the terror slides the target up to 2 squares to another square within the terror's reach.	
Str 3 (+3)	**Dex** 20 (+12) **Wis** 10 (+7)
Con 16 (+10)	**Int** 4 (+4) **Cha** 23 (+13)
Alignment evil	**Languages** –

Skill Challenge: Destroying the Stone

To destroy the Stone of Madness, the characters must use magical skill and insight into otherworldly items and creatures.

Level: 15 (6,000 XP).

Complexity: 5 (requires 12 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Arcana, Nature, Religion; to use these skills, a character must be within 5 squares of the stone.

Arcana (DC 22; standard action; trained only): The character speaks arcane words that weaken the stone's magic. Cracks to appear across its surface.

Nature (DC 22; standard action; primal power source and trained only): The character calls forth primal spirits to repel the unnatural forces of the stone. The spirits rage against the object, weakening it.

Religion (DC 22; standard action; divine power source and trained only): The character recites holy verses that are anathema to the Elder Elemental Eye, causing the stone to shudder.

Attacking the Stone: The Stone of Madness has AC/Fortitude 30, Reflex 5; immune to fire, necrotic, poison, psychic, forced movement, all conditions, and ongoing damage. An attack that deals 25 or more damage counts as a success in the skill challenge.

Secondary Skills: Dungeoneering, Perception.

Dungeoneering or Perception (DC 22; minor action): The character finds a weak point in the Stone of Madness. The next attack the character makes against the stone needs to deal only 15 damage or more to count as a success in the skill challenge (see "Attacking the Stone" above).

Success: The stone explodes, dealing 15 damage to each creature within 3 squares of it. Creatures outside the pit can make a saving throw, taking half damage on a save. The Stone of Madness is obliterated, the spectral terrors vanish, and Thane Arnak regains his senses and ceases his attacks on the characters. He orders his underlings to do the same.

Failure: The Stone of Madness deals 25 psychic damage to characters who participated in the skill challenge, and such characters are dominated (save ends). The stone instructs dominated characters to attack one another. In addition, the number of successes and failures accrued in this skill challenge reset to zero.

Development

If the characters destroy the Stone of Madness without slaying Arnak, the stone giant thane regains his senses. His Wisdom score returns to normal (22), as does his Charisma score (16). He shows his gratitude by giving the party his treasure (see area 15D).

Arnak also tells the characters that the ingots in his hoard are part of a larger trove hidden in the mountains. The thane divulges the location of this lost dragonborn trove. This hook can be a side quest that the characters undertake at your discretion. It is especially appropriate if the characters haven't amassed sufficient XP to proceed with the next adventure in this four-part series, "Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl."

Concluding the Adventure

If the characters destroy the Stone of Madness without killing Thane Arnak, the adventure is not quite over. They must convince the stone giant to break his alliance with King Snurre. Arnak is reluctant to do so for fear of incurring the wrath of the other giant lords and endangering his people. Persuading Arnak to sever his ties to the other giant lords can be handled as a roleplaying encounter or run as a skill challenge (see below).

Skill Challenge: Fracturing the Alliance

In this skill challenge, the characters try to convince Thane Arnak to break his alliance with the other giant lords. Before they can attempt this skill challenge, the characters must free Arnak from the influence of the Stone of Madness.

Level: 16 (4,200 XP).

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Intimidate.

Bluff (DC 22; standard action): The character tries to convince Arnak that the other giant lords are plotting against him (or a similar falsehood). This skill can be used any number of times during the skill challenge, but each failed Bluff check imposes a cumulative -2 penalty to subsequent Charisma-based checks made as part of the skill challenge.

Diplomacy (DC 22; standard action): The character urges Arnak to consider an alliance with the humans and dwarves, assures him that the stone giants won't be left to fend for themselves if Snurre retaliates,

convinces him that the giant alliance is backed by a greater evil, or offers him an incentive to break the alliance.

History (DC 22; standard action): The character reminds Arnak that his people's past alliances with dwarves were mutually beneficial, or points to a specific historical event that might make Arnak reconsider his alliance with Snurre.

Intimidate (DC 31; standard action): The character bullies or threatens Arnak into breaking the alliance, perhaps suggesting that the humans and dwarves will attack the stone giants if Arnak doesn't listen.

Secondary Skills: Arcana, Insight.

Arcana (DC 22; minor action): The character has some understanding of how the elemental stone giants think and uses this knowledge to gain an edge in negotiations with Arnak. The next primary skill check the character makes as part of this challenge gains a +2 bonus if the Arcana check succeeds or takes a –2 penalty if it fails.

Insight (DC 22; minor action): The character reacts to Arnak's mood and tailors arguments accordingly. The next primary skill check the character makes as part of this challenge gains a +2 bonus if the Insight check succeeds or takes a –2 penalty if it fails.

Special Modifiers: If the characters killed Belastraya and Arnak knows it, increase the DC of all Charisma-based checks by 5. The thane is far less likely to trust the words or heed the advice of the people who slew his sister.

Success: Arnak vows to break his alliance with King Snurre despite the obvious risk to his people. In addition to completing the challenge, each character gains 1,200 XP for completing the "Fracture the Alliance" major quest (see "Quests," page 2). Word of Arnak's treachery spreads throughout the giant armies. King Snurre tasks Grugnur, jarl of the frost giants, with launching a full-scale assault on Howling Crag. This turn of events buys time for the humans and their allies, allowing them to fortify their defenses. After a few bloody assaults on Howling Crag, Snurre heeds the advice of his advisors and turns his attention back to the humans and their allies, vowing to finish off Arnak later.

Failure: Arnak makes vague promises about limiting the number of stone giants he sends to bolster Snurre's army, but he refuses to break his alliance out of fear of reprisal. The party earns full XP for this skill challenge but fails to complete the "Fracture the Alliance" quest (see "Quests," page 2).

Despite this failure, Arnak promises to reconsider his position if Jarl Grugnur is eliminated. The death of the frost giant jarl would be enough to make Arnak sever his alliance with Snurre.

The Adventure Continues

After the characters have dealt with Thane Arnak, they can return to civilization to spend their hard-earned gold and collect on their various quests. They have a few days to recover from their ordeal before they are called upon once again to break the enemy alliance by slaying Grugnur, ruler of the frost giants and tactical commander of Snurre's armies.

"Warrens of the Stone Giant Thane" is the second adventure in a four-part series. The subsequent adventurers are described briefly below, giving you an idea of where the campaign is headed.

Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl

The characters explore an icy rift and confront the tactical mastermind behind the giants' raids (*Dungeon* 199).

Hall of the Fire Giant King

The characters challenge the mighty fire giant king and discover the secret power behind his throne (*Dungeon* 200).

About the Author

Christopher Perkins is the D&D Senior Producer at Wizards of the Coast. He writes: "Stone giants didn't have much to do in the classic 'G'-series adventures, nor were they particularly evil in earlier editions of the game. My goal here was to create some memorable stone giant villains and prove that stone giants are as fun to beat up as hill, frost, and fire giants are." Chris dedicates this adventure to the memory of Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, two great inspirations.

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Tavern Profile: Jaggerbad Skyhouse

By Will Doyle

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Some whisper of an inn that sails the skies on a dragon's back. Bound to the mercurial archfey of the Court of Stars, this enchanted skyhouse glides through the planes on an endless, fate-smitten journey. It is said that those who earn the favor of the fey can call upon its services by chanting the dragon's name, and journey aboard the skyhouse to any destination they please.

With patrons alighting from across the planes, a staff of fey-cursed wanderers, and a layout that shifts when you're not looking, this bewitched inn offers plenty of scope for adventure. For Dungeon Masters wishing

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to bring some interplanar travel into their games, or introduce the mysterious Feywild and its Court of Stars, Jaggerbad Skyhouse offers a memorable starting point.

History

Hundreds of years ago, in an age long-lost to an unremembered past, Jaggerbad Skyhouse was gifted to the Summer Queen Tiandra by Oren, Lord of the Green Fey. Together they would wing from world to world, witnessing the wonders of each plane, or daring to gaze into the weird night that lay between. But the affections of the fey world shift like sand, and in time Tiandra turned her back on Oren. Wearied by her games, the Green Lord bequeathed the skyhouse to Fly, the most favored of his servants, and told him to do with it as he pleased.

In the centuries since, Fly has used the skyhouse to ferry visitors to and from his master's court. Its bridal chambers have become suites for visiting fey barons, its dining hall a bar for otherworldly envoys. Visitors from the mortal world are also common. Delighted by their simple affairs, Fly uses his magic to meddle in their lives. When chance would have it, the wily fey and his mysterious skyhouse appear from nowhere, whisking unsuspecting mortals on a journey across the planes. Some return as rich men or heroes. Others are lost forever.

Inn Layout

The inn's thatched hall is strapped to the back of a colossal iron dragon. The entire structure straddles a mechanized saddle of timber and cloth, which operates like a concertina during flight to maintain stability. Collapsible sails are strung by rope and rigging to the dragon's flanks, and manned by a somber crew of wooden sailors. A jumble of staircases, gantries, and bridges allow the crew to move about its back whilst airborne.

The Common Room: Passengers are ushered inside here after being hoisted aboard on baskets. Dusky flames burn from shuttered lanterns and faeries flit through the smoke-scented air. The walls are carved mahogany, with darkened conference chambers lurking behind silken drapes. This is no bawdy tavern: the skyhouse plays host to powerful beings from across the planes, and its ambience is one of sphinx-like mystery. Arched windows gaze out over whichever plane the dragon currently journeys through.

Those who step inside might be startled to see that it is larger within than it seemed without, but this is just a trick of the eye. In fact, a powerful spell has been cast over the inn that shrinks its visitors down to a smaller size.

Staff Quarters: These are off-limits to passengers and hidden away behind a magically sealed door. The innkeeper changes his password every day, sometimes every hour, so even his own staff might suddenly find themselves locked out. The chambers beyond include the innkeeper's own opulent quarters, the kitchens, and most important of all, a private balcony used for speaking to the dragon during flight.

Passenger Deck: Double staircases sweep from the common room to a minstrel's gallery, where cloaked archways lead to a network of sleeping chambers. The corridors up here have a habit of shifting about when no one's looking, tricking patrons into getting lost or entering into the wrong rooms. Hidden passageways can be found behind picture frames, and wizard-locked doors may open of their own accord, enticing passengers into long-lost chambers—or even into other planes.

Inn Staff

The cooks, scullery maids, and bar staff are all mortals who have wittingly or unwittingly entered into one of Fly's bargains. Once bound, they are magically compelled to stay until the mysterious terms of their deal have been met. Fly treats each guest differently: romancing some, pointedly ignoring others, and in some instances showing them the full extent of his ire. His staff roster is constantly changing, as the terms of his bargains are as unpredictable as the innkeeper himself. Adventurers might be served by an innocent girl on one journey, only to find her replaced by a cruel-hearted drow mercenary on the way back.

Fly the Innkeeper: Lord Oren's emissary is known to mortals by many names. To some he is William Finesort, an ambrosial spirit who brings unlikely lovers together, or the Green Knave, who sours milk and leads travelers astray in the marshes. To others he is the Hob Knocker, a villain who swaps mortal babies for changelings and tattles secrets he has overheard.

Fly commonly appears as a handsome young half-elf, although certain of his features seem older than they should. As changeable as quicksilver, he can be joking one moment and deeply melancholic the next. Only in business does he conform to any consistent personality, where he comes across as cheerily tenacious and whip-crack smart.

Fly is fiercely loyal to Oren, whom he admires and fears in equal measure. His master's personal guests are always afforded the wildest luxuries and treated first above all others. But in spite of these loyalties, Fly harbors greater affection for Queen Tiandra. Unbeknownst to its true master, the skyhouse regularly berths at the sylvan groves of Senaliesse, where Fly fattens his mistress's love of the Mortal World with tales of his wayward servants.

Fly the Innkeeper	**Level 19 Controller (Leader)**
Medium fey humanoid	XP 2,400
HP 178; **Bloodied** 89	**Initiative** +13
AC 33, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 31	**Perception** +11
Speed 6, teleport 6	Low-light vision
Traits	
☼ **Swarm of Faeries** ✦ **Aura** 2	
Enemies in the aura grant combat advantage to Fly's allies and cannot teleport.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Lute Smash** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +24 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d6 + 13 damage, and the target falls prone.	
✧ **Befuddle** (charm) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +22 vs. Will	
Hit: As a free action, the target makes a basic attack against a target of Fly's choice.	
☤ **Harmless Form** (polymorph) ✦ **Recharge** when the power misses or a target saves against it	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +22 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d6 + 16 damage, and the target transforms into a small animal until the end of its next turn. While transformed, the target can take only move actions.	
Aftereffect: The target is dazed (save ends).	
Skills Arcana +21, Nature +16, Thievery +18	
Str 15 (+11) **Dex** 19 (+13) **Wis** 15 (+11)	
Con 18 (+13) **Int** 24 (+16) **Cha** 22 (+15)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven	
Equipment lute	

Jaggerbad: The iron dragon is bound to Lord Oren and lives by one tenet: the clock. He never stops until he reaches his destination, always leaves on the dot, and never deviates from his course. He pays little heed to events inside the inn unless such discountenance would jeopardize his timetable.

Jaggerbad treats Fly with an air of professional detachment but never questions his orders. To navigate the planes, he unfurls a vast scroll, upon which all of his appointments appear by magic alongside detailed maps and directions. It is said that those who call upon the skyhouse appear on the dragon's schedule well before they even think to do so.

Jaggerbad's story is the subject of much speculation. Some say he once waged war on Ishimriel, an eladrin city that danced between the planes. By day, it lay in the mortal world, but by night it would worldfall back to the Feywild, allowing its defenders to muster reinforcements. To beat them, Jaggerbad made a pact with the archfey: the power to shift between the planes, on the condition he swore fealty to Oren each morning. In time, the dragon arrived late for his appointment, and the Green Lord demanded that he spend a thousand years in servitude, each day carrying the burden of Oren's skyhouse between the planes. If he were ever late again, proud Oren would add another hundred years to his sentence.

Whatever's the truth, Jaggerbad has served his time faithfully. Perhaps his tempers have mellowed over the decades, but he still dreams of his hoard, and maybe even lays patient plans against those who defied him so long ago.

The Wooden Sailors: These automata were crafted long ago by the Summer Queen. Despite being possessed of simple cunning and some small degree of independent thought, their duties extend to little more than manning the sails. At a pinch, Fly can command them to take up arms against quarrelsome guests, but this is rarely called for.

Wooden Sailor	**Level 16 Skirmisher**
Medium natural animate (construct)	XP 1,400
HP 150; **Bloodied** 75	**Initiative** +17
AC 30, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 26	**Perception** +10
Speed 6	Darkvision
Immune charm, disease, poison; **Vulnerable** 10 fire	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Slam** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 13 damage.	
Triggered Actions	
Crafty ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: The sailor starts its turn adjacent to an enemy.	
Effect (Free Action): The sailor shifts up to half its speed.	
Dodge ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy granting combat advantage to the sailor hits the sailor with an attack.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The sailor gains a +5 bonus to the defense the attack targets. If the attack misses, the sailor can shift 1 square as a free action.	
Str 18 (+12) **Dex** 24 (+15) **Wis** 15 (+10)	
Con 14 (+10) **Int** 7 (+6) **Cha** 4 (+5)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

Patrons

The skyhouse has no regulars. Its patrons are guests to Oren's Court, or chance-met travelers who've been gifted passage by the whimsical fey. Otherworldly guests are typically the most forthcoming, seeing the journey as an opportunity for interplanar trade or to unravel the mysteries of different worlds. Mortals tend to be more wary of their surroundings, or even think them a dream. Others are more villainous and look upon the skyhouse as the perfect setting for a robbery or a discreet assassination.

To find out who's here when your players visit, roll twice on the following tables: first to determine the type of patron, and then to determine why he, she, or it is traveling.

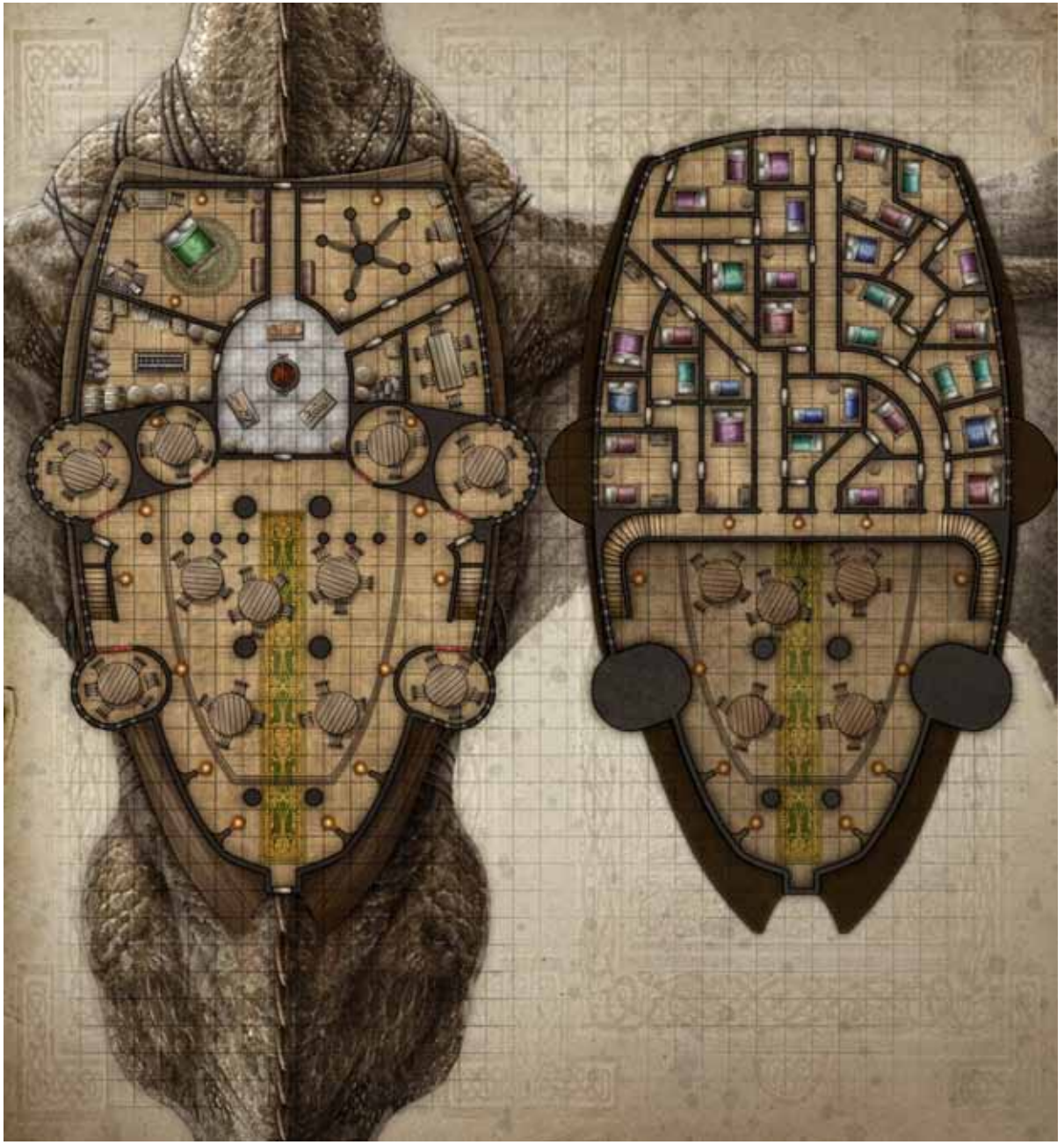
d10	Patron
1	Veiled princess and her retinue
2	Tattooed devil hunter
3	Planar explorer and his cartographer
4	Turbaned, gold-painted dwarf
5	Winter fey at a frost-rimed table
6	Mind flayer pirate
7	Salamander warlord and bodyguards
8	Runaway angel
9	Pair of eloping lovers
10	Gnome illusionist riding a beholder

d10	Reason for Travel
1	Escorting a prisoner
2	Seeking an audience with the gods
3	Searching for a lost friend
4	Playing *Three-Dragon Ante*
5	Transporting a casket of souls
6	Meeting an exarch of Bane
7	Getting married at Oren's Court
8	Seeking the Plane of Dreams
9	Trying to break a curse
10	Carrying a king's body to Celestia

Introducing the Skyhouse

Most passengers summon the skyhouse by chanting the dragon's name. Only those who please the faeries of Oren's Court are taught how, and in keeping with their capricious nature, the knowledge might be imparted for all manner of deeds. A powerful sultan might free one of Oren's courtiers from captivity, only to share his journey with a common farmer who sprung a rabbit from a trap.

Try devising an encounter wherein the adventurers perform some favor for the fey, perhaps unwittingly so. Afterward, an emissary from Oren's Court comes forward and teaches them Jaggerbad's



Call. This emissary might be a fey, a talking animal, or an animated object of some kind.

Another way to introduce the inn is to have your players stumble across it in the wild. Fly often stops over to take on supplies and gladly welcomes paid custom. Such generosity always comes with a warning: they must be gone before the dragon takes off. To turn this into a memorable adventure, have the magic of the inn work against them: perhaps they are lulled asleep at their table and awaken in a different plane, or get lost in the shifting halls when returning from their rooms. The mischievous innkeeper then demands an outrageous toll for the journey, which can only be paid off by agreeing to one of his faerie bargains.

A third option is for Fly to seek them out himself. He might entice them with offers of free passage or the chance to consult rich and powerful patrons. In fact, those who prick their thumbs in agreement are bewitched into his service. This is a great way to assemble a party for an interplanar campaign, with each player taking on different jobs. As the skyhouse whirls between the planes, they'll encounter strange folk and even stranger mysteries, all the while seeking a way to overcome the terms of their faerie bargains.

Fly's Bargain

The innkeeper's bargains bind his victims into magical servitude. Each toils away on a different duty and needs special permission to leave the skyhouse. Even if they escape, they'll wake back in their quarters whenever they next fall asleep.

Fly's bargain is like a curse. After each extended rest, a player makes a Streetwise check to determine their character's progress on the curse track. This represents a day's work dealing with the patrons and earning the innkeeper's favor. A character can choose to aid a companion's check, but doing so means the character automatically fails his or her own check.

To end the curse, characters must fulfill the terms of their bargain. This might be as simple as staying onboard the skyhouse for a week or as off-the-wall as bringing the innkeeper a hair plucked from a werewolf's eyebrow.

Fly's Bargain **Level 19 Curse**

"By the pricking of my thumb, so our faerie deal is done." Who would've thought the innkeeper's deal would be so irksome or deadly!

Stage 0: The curse is dormant.

Stage 1: The target is disturbed by strange whisperings and weird sightings and takes a –2 penalty to all skill checks.

Stage 2: The target is continually harassed by mischievous faeries and must roll twice when making a skill check, always taking the lower result.

Stage 3: The target can no longer tell dream from reality. In combat, the target is always dazed.

Check: At the end of each extended rest, the target makes a Insight check.

16 or Lower: The stage of the curse increases by one.

17–23: No change.

24 or Higher: The stage of the curse decreases by one (if at stage 0, there is no change).

Lifting the Curse: The target fulfills the strange terms of Fly's bargain.

Adventures on the Skyhouse

With the wonders of the planes just a wingbeat away, adventure on the skyhouse is never hard to find. Use the hooks below as fodder for your own stories.

Hook: Dragon Delay

The adventurers are contacted by sages from the ancient eladrin city of Ishimriel. According to their records, Jaggerbad's millennial term of servitude is coming to an end. They fear that the dragon, once freed, will return to their city and destroy it. To prevent catastrophe, the players must find a way to delay the dragon and thereby trick Lord Oren into extending its sentence.

Hook: Daylight Robbery

An eladrin trader hires the adventurers to steal information from Jaggerbad's scroll of appointments. One of his rivals is planning a trip aboard the skyhouse, and the eladrin plans to rob his rival's stronghold whilst he's away. The adventurers must find a way to distract the dragon during flight, steal the scroll from its saddlebags, and then find out when the eladrin's rival is making the journey.

About the Author

Will Doyle is a video game designer currently working in the United Kingdom. This article completes one of his life's objectives of having a publication in *Dungeon* magazine. When they're not playing D&D, he and his girlfriend keep a blog called Beholder Pie (http://beholderpie.blogspot.com/).

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Cormyr Royale: The Royal Court of the Forest Kingdom

By Brian Cortijo

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For fourteen and a half centuries, the Forest Kingdom of Cormyr has stood as the most shining example of human civilization in the Heartlands of Faerûn. This fertile, flourishing land is full of adventurous souls, great cities, and wondrous landscapes. Across the realm, however, squabbling nobles, scheming merchants, and power-mad wizards all vie for power. Only the strength of the Crown, its loyal agents, and the careful balance of power at the Royal Court has kept the Obarskyrs strong upon the Dragon Throne for so long.

The Royal Court of Cormyr is a nexus of power, intrigue, and status. Here, nobles advance their causes before the Crown, attempting to prove their loyalty and usefulness to the king. Yet at the same time, many secretly plot to depose the ruling Obarskyrs in favor of their own offspring or a council of ruling nobles. Despite these ongoing threats, the crowned heads of Cormyr—along with their able Royal Magicians—have maintained their power by the careful selection of officers and advisors who have the best interests of the kingdom at heart.

Presented here are two distinct incarnations of the Royal Court: that of the Steel Regent, Alusair Nacacia Obarskyr, as it was on Midwinter in the Year of the Lost Keep (1379 DR); and that of Alusair's grand-nephew, King Foril Obarskyr, exactly one hundred years later in the Year of the Ageless One (1479 DR).

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Court of the Steel Regent

The Steel Regent, Alusair Nacacia, rules in the name of her nephew, King Azoun V. The young king assumed the throne when his mother, Crown Princess Tanalasta, died in childbirth. His grandfather, King Azoun IV, had been killed only months before, defending Cormyr from a deadly invasion of orcs and goblins. Through the initial years of her regency, Alusair has grown into an able ruler, more trusted by the people to guide the realm than she once was.

REWRITING HISTORY

Although the events between the regency of Princess Alusair and the reign of King Foril are established in broad strokes in the timeline on page 17, feel free to alter or ignore events if you choose to play in this era or during the reign of Azoun V. Your campaign can deviate from the official events of the campaign setting to whatever extent is necessary to make the game fun and engaging. If something doesn't work for you and your players, change it!

Persons of the Royal Court

The Royal Court in the Cormyr capital of Suzail is a confusing and ever-changing array of nobles, courtiers, military officers, petitioners, and citizens who jockey for power, influence, or mere survival. Despite the uncertainty of their continued station, certain royals and courtiers are among those that any visitor to the Steel Regent's court knows—or should know—by reputation if not by sight.

Steel Regent Alusair Nacacia

Alusair Nacacia Obarskyr has served as the regent for her nephew, King Azoun V, since his birth. In those years, she has softened from a battle-hardened veteran of Cormyr's wars with the Tuigan Horde and the Devil Dragon into a different kind of soldier. Now, she spars verbally with nobles and emissaries from Sembia and Netheril, committed to protecting the Forest Kingdom and the Dragon Throne until Azoun is old enough to rule it in his own name.

Although she spends much of her time at court, Alusair maintains a cadre of warriors known as the Blades—a group of young nobles that rode with her during her father's reign. The Blades hunt together, rooting out threats to the kingdom. When these nobles inherit their family titles or rise to prominence in other fields, Alusair replaces them with loyal adventurers committed to Cormyr's defense.

The Steel Regent respects those who state their intentions openly, are loyal to Cormyr, and do not seek status or recognition for their acts. Loyalty and duty are virtues to be honored, and although ambition can be as keen a motivation as gold or title, Alusair prefers to deal with adventurers willing to serve Cormyr for its own sake.

Filfaeril Selazair, the Dowager Dragon Queen

The widow of Azoun IV has survived the death of her husband, her infant son, and her eldest daughter, only to see her sole remaining child rule in the name of her grandson. Filfaeril endured much in her years as Queen of Cormyr, but carries herself now with grace as the nation's Dowager Dragon Queen.

As intelligent and observant as she is beautiful, Filfaeril retains all the influence she wielded during her husband's reign, maintaining a tight hold on those nobles who remain skeptical that Alusair can properly guide the realm. The Dowager Dragon Queen also maintains strong ties with the Harpers, and has fostered a small coterie of loyal agents (see "Eye on the Realms: Queen Filfaeril's Blades" in *Dungeon* 187).

At court, Filfaeril divides her time between hearing the complaints of courtiers and nobles who do not believe Alusair will address their concerns, quietly and firmly supporting her daughter, or fending off suggestion that either she or Alusair should marry. Whenever possible, she publicly declares that the Steel Regent, the Royal Magician Caladnei, or the War Wizard Laspeera are better suited to hear the voices of the people than an aging matron focused on raising a grandson to be a worthy king of Cormyr. Despite such attempts to disengage, the realm knows that Filfaeril's commands are to be obeyed without question. When the Dowager Queen speaks, she does so for the Crown.

King Azoun V

The King of Cormyr is a handsome, intelligent, and increasingly foolhardy seven-year-old boy who questions all authority and thinks himself the master of all he surveys. As it happens, the boy-king is half correct, although it will be years before anyone will respect him enough to obey him as anything more than a spoiled and entitled royal.

Azoun spends his days receiving tutoring in history from Alaphondar, Cormyr's Sage Royal, and in etiquette by Laspeera. His favorite hours are spent in combat training with his aunt Alusair, who intersperses his lessons with tales of famous battles, military tactics, and Cormyr's kings.

The Steel Regent, the Royal Magician, and the Dowager Dragon Queen work tirelessly to ensure that no one whose loyalty and intentions they have not thoroughly tested is permitted access to the young king. Any attempt to speak to him alone is treated as a possible threat to the Dragon Throne and Azoun's life.

Caladnei, Royal Magician

Since the retirement of her predecessor, the legendary Vangerdahast, Caladnei has slowly shed her reputation as an upstart, outlander mage. The daughter of Thabrant Swordsilver, a Cormyrian woodcarver who made his home and life in distant Turmish, Caladnei has long had to dodge rumors that she is the former lover, or the illegitimate daughter, or the magic construct of Vangerdahast. Despite such distractions, she has earned the respect of the War Wizards who serve under her and the nobles who owe fealty to the Dragon Throne.

Like Filfaeril, Caladnei works closely with the Harpers to seek out and unveil enemies of the Crown and threats to Cormyr. With little interest in matters at court, she has even less patience for diplomacy and protocol than the Steel Regent does. As a former adventurer, the Royal Magician sees the value of chartered, Crown-licensed heroes roaming the realm. Such characters are given free reign to explore Cormyr's wilds and ruins, driving out threats that would otherwise distract the Purple Dragons and the War Wizards from their more important tasks.

Laspeera Naerinth, Lady Eveningspire

Laspeera is variably known as Lady Naerinth, Lady Inthré (the family name of her husband, Wizard of War Aundable Inthré), or Lady Eveningspire (after the lands granted her by Azoun IV). The owner of the prestigious girls' school known as the House of Grace, she is a powerful spellcaster and the second-in-command of the War Wizards, answering only to Caladnei, Filfaeril, and the Steel Regent. All other officers of the realm—as well as most nobles, wise courtiers, and all but the most foolhardy of commoners—obey her orders.

Given the Royal Magician's discomfort with official matters, Laspeera has assumed most of the duties associated with Caladnei's role as Court Wizard. She holds the first chair at gatherings of the Council of Mages, addresses magical issues of concern to the Steel Regent, maintains the rolls of the kingdom's registered mages, and suggests ways in which the Crown's magical pursuits might better serve the realm. Unofficially, Laspeera guides adventurers who find their way to court, easing the paths of those she sees as a potential benefit to Cormyr. She likewise finds ways to stymie the efforts of the greedy, the grasping, or the ineffectual.

Lady Eveningspire recently shocked the last gathering of the Council of Mages when she unexpectedly went into labor, delivering her first child—a daughter, Alazne. Using magic, Laspeera had managed to conceal her pregnancy, catching the court entirely by surprise.

Alaphondar, Sage Royal

With more than four decades of service, Alaphondar is perhaps the longest tenured courtier in Suzail. Certainly, he is the most trusted servant of the Crown among both the nobility and the royal family. Although he possesses a rudimentary magical knowledge, Alaphondar is one of the few members of Alusair's inner circle with no experience either as a soldier or a War Wizard. The Sage Royal's opinion is thus grounded in the lessons of history and long years of study. Kind, intelligent, and tactfully honest, Alaphondar is capable of bringing insight into most matters. Unburdened by worry for his position, the Sage Royal can coolly assess any situation, navigating the most difficult challenges analytically rather than passionately.

Unknown to most—although whispered by many—Alaphondar has become the lover of Dowager Queen Filfaeril in the years following her husband's death. Their affection is borne of a sense of duty and mutual fondness, and though he has loved Filfaeril for years, Alaphondar accepts that the late king remains foremost in her heart.

Alaphondar can be trusted to give frank, direct advice to newcomers at court regarding how to behave and the proper protocol for any particular situation. Failure to heed his advice prompts the Sage Royal to cease offering it.

Myrmeen Lhal, Lady of Arabel

The long-serving master of the city of Arabel is a veteran warrior and ranger, and a worshiper of Tymora. After thirty years, Myrmeen is growing tired of her position, and is slowly transitioning her life to Suzail. Though she prefers the remote country closer to Arabel and the Stonelands, recent events have changed her outlook and goals. The birth of her son, Ganrion; the marriage of her adopted daughter Krystin to Warden Dauneth Marliir; and the birth of Krystin and Dauneth's daughter, Nalara, have all convinced Myrmeen that her proper place is closer to the capital, to her family, and to her dear friend and favored sparring partner, Alusair.

To this end, Myrmeen has petitioned the Crown to find a replacement for her as Lord of Arabel (her official title). Although she still awaits the blessing of the Dragon Throne to retire from her position, Myrmeen has already begun moving her household to Suzail, and has vested more authority in her herald, Westar.

At court, Myrmeen remains quiet regarding most matters, preferring to give the Steel Regent the enjoyable task of putting nobles and adventurers in their place.

Dauneth Marliir, High Warden of the Eastern Marches

A capable strategist, even if a less than formidable soldier, Dauneth Marliir has risen sharply in the estimation of the Crown in recent years. Formerly a bumbling, well-meaning courtier and younger son of House Marliir, the Warden of the Eastern Marches has thoroughly impressed the important figures at

court with his acumen. Some now whisper that he will soon be appointed High Marshal of the kingdom. Alusair in particular is impressed with Dauneth's ability to shut up, listen to his sword captains, and make the best decisions for the realm.

Dauneth continually seeks skilled adventurers willing to brave the northeast frontier of Cormyr, beyond the easy reach of the Purple Dragons. He believes that small, experienced groups of such characters can be more useful than whole companies of inexperienced soldiers trained for battle but not for exploration.

Formerly a suitor for the affections of Crown Princess Tanalasta, Dauneth recently married the daughter of the Lady of Arabel. The couple have a daughter, Nalara. Although the seat of the Marliirs' power is in Arabel, Dauneth has decided to make his family's home in Suzail, to better serve the realm.

Sthavar, Lord Magister of Suzail

Always keeping a respectful distance from the royal family, Sthavar is content to perform his duty to the Crown on a purely professional level. Sthavar has served as Suzail's Lord Magister for decades, keeping order in a city rife with grasping nobles, greedy merchants, and disruptive adventurers.

An efficient, capable administrator, Sthavar happily antagonizes the merchants of Suzail, resisting calls to raze homes in the poorer districts so as to expand the city's docking warehouses. Despite his role in ruling Suzail in the name of the Dragon Throne, Sthavar has no official duties at court, and he prefers to keep it that way. Unlike other local lords, he has no responsibility for chartering adventurers, and cheerily refers characters seeking such sanction to the High Warden.

THE ROYAL CHILDREN

For the first time in years, a number of children wander the court of Suzail, protected by the most capable War Wizards, Purple Dragons, and Highknights in the kingdom. King Azoun, who is approaching his eighth birthday, is described on page 2. Other important children at court include the following.

Alazne Inthré: The daughter of Laspeera Naerinth and Aundable Inthré is less than a year old, but stares about the Council of Mages with intense blue eyes that show off the intelligence of a child much older. As the offspring of a pair of middle-aged wizards—one the second in command of the War Wizards and the most respected mage in the kingdom, the other a powerful spellcaster in his own right—Alazne is watched carefully by courtiers.

Ganrahast: Known throughout the kingdom as Ganrion, the son of Lady Myrmeen is a quiet boy of five with crimson hair and soft brown eyes. Unknown to most, the boy's father is former Royal Magician Vangerdahast. Myrmeen has chosen (on the advice of Laspeera) to conceal Ganrahast's heritage until his aptitude for magic is known. Given the attention focused on the young Alazne Inthré, this caution seems more than justified.

Nalara Marliir: The future of the five-year-old Nalara Marliir is more fiercely debated than that of any other child at court except Azoun. The daughter of the High Warden of the Eastern Marches spends much of her time at court clinging to the skirts of her grandmother, Myrmeen Lhal. Nalara watches with night-black eyes as nobles debate which of their own heirs will marry her when she comes of age, raising that husband's family higher in the estimation of the Dragon Throne.

Smiling Traitors

Cormyr's long history is littered with enemies and traitors—spurned nobles, turncoat soldiers, ambitious War Wizards, and worse. The Steel Regency is no exception.

Ingo Siegur

Most Purple Dragons consider only two acceptable ends to their careers—to die in defense of the kingdom, or to retire to home, farm, and family in the backwoods of Cormyr. Not so for the scout Ingo Siegur. Despite his love of falconry, hunting, and tracking in the wild places of Cormyr, the Suzail-raised warrior has always preferred the safe enclosure of the city's walls to the cold blanket of the night sky.

Long into his retirement, Ingo has finally found love in the guise of a young lass named Fadlimi. Slender and darkly beautiful, she constantly begs Ingo for stories of his service, which he patiently relates. Tactics, formations, secret passwords, the locations of supply caches and serviceable weapons, and other bits of trivia have all been shared.

Siegur has no idea that Fadlimi is not an innocent admirer, but is gathering information for the Sons of Gondegal (see below). She plans to use this information for an eventual infiltration of the King's Forest, from which the Sons of Gondegal plan to conquer Arabel. If presented with this fact without proof, Ingo (a human knife fighter from *Monster Manual 2*) will defend Fadlimi (a doppelganger assassin from the *Monster Manual*) to the death, unable to believe that she would betray him.

Nuad Culbran

A powerful wizard of unknown age, Nuad Culbran is a respected alarphon (a spellcaster dedicated to internal security) among the War Wizards. He is also a Zhentarim mage named Estev, who slaughtered the true Culbran months ago and has assumed his position. One of the few Zhents to have found a way of thwarting the powerful mind-reading magic wielded by Laspeera and Caladnei, Estev has already caused the deaths of two other War Wizards, each of whom he convinced to accuse the other of treason against the Crown.

"Nuad" prefers to avoid direct confrontation, instead coercing other characters to confront one another. If necessary, he dominates lesser minds to lead loyal Cormyrians astray. He has successfully allowed other Zhents to infiltrate the Royal Court, though he does not protect them if they fail in their espionage. He anxiously awaits the day when he can stand over the shattered bodies of the royal family, the flag of the Black Network flying over the palace.

Though Estev does not particularly enjoy combat, he is a formidable foe (use the human mind adept from the *Dark Sun® Creature Catalog* or the *D&D Insider* Compendium), capable of turning the most experienced characters against themselves.

THE COUNCIL OF MAGES

This group of wizards advises on the use of magic in the name of the Dragon Throne, shaping the laws that control magical wrongdoing in the Forest Kingdom. Laspeera chairs these monthly meetings in Caladnei's name (Caladnei, as Court Wizard, is the official head of the council but is often absent). The council hears the concerns of the arcane casters of the realm, in addition to considering applicants hoping to join the War Wizards. Some of the other noteworthy mage-councilors of Cormyr include the following.

Tsharlura of Blackthorne: This aging wizard dwells in a tower west of Eveningstar and specializes in practical applications of magic. A firm believer in correct and deliberative spellcasting, Tsharlura is shown great respect by the Crown. When Vangerdahast was faced with hot-tempered young mages inadvertently threatening to destroy half of the King's Forest testing new magic, Tsharlura is the one to whom the Royal Magician pointed and said, "You see how the wisdom of ages cools the temper and slows eagerness? That is the kind of mage Cormyr needs."

Aundable Inthré: The husband of Laspeera is a powerful mage in his own right. Aundable is one of many council mages who analyze Cormyr's defenses and weaknesses, strengthening the former and mitigating the latter. Although he does not often speak at council meetings, Aundable makes it a point to attend them all, even if he sometimes magically records the proceedings while his thoughts wander to new spells and other distractions.

Argûl Marammas: Resident of Suzail, planar explorer, crafter of magic scrolls, and lover of fine seafood, Argûl uses his magical power to support his expensive travels and diet. He believes that magic is best used as a tool for collecting knowledge, not as a power to be used for gathering more power, to dominate others, or to slay one's enemies. He uses the Council of Mages as an avenue for finding others of like mind, for hearing of the planar travels and magical discoveries of others, and for briefing the Crown on potential extraplanar threats.

Filani of Tantras and Tilverton: An expert on Moonsea history and the politics of the Dragon Reach, Filani lived in Tilverton until that city's destruction. She now attends meetings of the council as a means to find new clients for her knowledge and expertise, and to learn of new mages who have recently arrived in Suzail.

Maxer Hlar, Defender of Suzail: A powerful evoker who once defeated four dragons simultaneously attacking Suzail, Maxer is a baron extraordinary of the realm and can command any Purple Dragon as though possessing an officer's rank. He is silent during most council meetings, but when he speaks, his experience and wisdom afford him the attention of all in attendance. His voice during the official business of a meeting often heralds warnings of grave danger to the realm, and has twice led to tense moments when Maxer was simply clearing his throat.

Court Intrigues

Numerous intrigues swirl around the Dragon Throne at all times, plaguing the Royal Court with gossip and innuendo. Such rumors and whispered accusations should be carefully assessed by characters at court.

Churches Royal

Before her death, Crown Princess Tanalasta adopted the worship of Chauntea, declaring the faith of the Earthmother to be a Church Royal (a title designating its institutional support by a member of the monarch's immediate family). Since Tanalasta's death, the church of Chauntea has struggled to maintain its status. Its worshipers must contend with the faiths of Tempus and Tyr (both worshiped by the late Azoun IV), in addition to three faiths—of Sune, Siamorphe, and Tymora—whose followers seek the patronage of the Dowager Queen.

No living member of the royal family has declared any new Church Royal in the aftermath of the uproar

created by Tanalasta's declaration. However, this does not prevent a church's powerful followers from openly soliciting noble and royal support.

A Young Court

Most members of the court look on all political or personal developments as either obstacles or opportunities. Whether in the name of wealth, influence, or title, observant courtiers and nobles are constantly on the lookout for any advantage. This is particularly true of the presence of so many young nobles at court.

Older nobles see these influential younglings as possible pawns and targets for strategic marriage. Courtiers view them as potential patrons and supporters, ready to keep them comfortably employed long into old age. Nobles with less honorable intentions attempt to sow seeds of dissent in young minds, hoping to use this dissent to one day tear the kingdom asunder.

A Marriageable Princess

Throughout her life, Alusair has faced attempts to make her a more suitable princess, whether by forcing her to dress as a proper noble, by discouraging activities such as riding and swordplay, or by marrying her off to a respectable noble in order that she might produce Obarskyr heirs and settle her wild ways. Such attempts have always failed, but this has not stopped the senior families of the realm, veteran courtiers, and even Caladnei and Filfaeril from seeking out men who the Steel Regent might accept as a suitor. Quiet rumors around court whisper that Alusair is barren, and thus incapable of creating the heirs that Cormyr needs. However, this has merely narrowed the field of suitors to those less interested in Alusair's offspring than they are in the rumors of her more bawdy escapades.

The Five Ladies

Since Alusair's regency began, she has worked to gather advisors she can trust, including her mother Filfaeril, the Dowager Queen; the Royal Magician Caladnei; the War Wizard Laspeera; and Myrmeen Lhal, Lady of Arabel. With Myrmeen's inevitable move to Suzail, some courtiers have taken to calling this group the Five Ladies of Cormyr, a formidable gathering of women bound by duty, family, and trust. Such courtiers feel—quite correctly—that the opinions of these women will be paramount in determining both the fate of the kingdom and the future of specific courtiers, nobles, and officers of the Purple Dragons. To raise the ire of any one of these women is to risk the enmity of the most powerful people in the kingdom.

The Silvers Ascendant

After the Obarskyr line, Cormyr has three "royal" families—the Crownsilvers, the Huntsilvers, and the Truesilvers, all descended from the Silver brothers whose offspring married into the Obarskyr clan. Since the death of Azoun IV, the three Silver houses have grown dramatically in influence and wealth, capitalizing on mercantile opportunities and overly public acts of loyalty to the Crown.

Many of the nobles of the realm are jealous of these ascendant stars. Rumors speak of plots that might see at least one of these august houses fall, rapidly and dramatically, in the near future.

Threats

Threats to Alusair's court do not originate only from treacherous nobles or ambitious merchants. Cormyr faces many dangers that must be dealt with before they become too large to manage.

Creeping Red

Nearly a decade after the fact, the Steel Regent remains furious in response to the establishment of a sovereign Thayan enclave in Marsember. The presence of Red Wizards on Cormyrian soil is taken by some as a sign that the Crown is losing its ability to challenge the power of the Spice Lords who control the city.

Flaming Knives of Westgate

Following their exile from Cormyr, the members of House Bleth fled to the city of Westgate. There, they took up with the Fire Knives, reestablishing that band of assassins in the hope of eventually taking vengeance on the Obarskyrs. With the Night Masks thieves' guild exerting greater control over both the Fire Knives and Westgate, the leaders of the Bleth family have turned their sights back on Cormyr. They might not strike immediately, but the Bleths have long memories, and are more than willing to wait to take down the royal family and install one of their own on the Dragon Throne.

Sons of Gondegal

Some thirty years ago, a war chief known as Gondegal rode into the northeastern reaches of Cormyr, conquering both Tilverton and Arabel. Although he held these lands for less than a tenday, he cemented himself both in Cormyr's history and the imagination of its people.

A group of brigands has recently taken up Gondegal's standard (a gray wolf's head with red eyes) and is menacing farms and caravans between Arabel and the Shadow Gap. Warden Marliir has yet to capture these Sons of Gondegal, but he has assured Alusair that their heads will decorate her parlor in time.

Unknowing Rebel

Despite her years of service, Caladnei is still seen as a foreign threat by some, who have asked, demanded, or begged Alusair to reconsider her appointment as Royal Magician. The Steel Regent has steadfastly refused, but some mages and former War Wizards continue to plot against Caladnei. These agents are plotting to force her into magical combat, hoping to slay and replace her with the native-born Laspeera. Lady Eveningspire has no knowledge of this plot, however, and the conspirators work hard to keep it that way, wanting her to be able to deny any involvement if they are revealed.

The Zhentarim Threat

The Zhentarim have finally obtained what they have long wished for—capable agents successfully ensconced in Cormyr's Royal Court. They dare not strike by the favored, time-tested means of poison or murder, knowing that the War Wizards have far too many means of protecting against such threats. Thus, these agents bide their time, fanning the flames of rebellion and noble unrest, and learning what they can as they wait for a time to strike.

Adventure Hooks

Not every adventure involves slogging through dungeons and facing down savage threats. The plots and intrigues of Suzail's court and palace can be just as dangerous as the threats found in any ancient ruin.

A Dissembling Wizard

The characters are approached by one of Cormyr's War Wizards, who hopes to root out a traitor within the court. As they investigate, the characters discover that the traitor they seek is, in fact, a loyal courtier. The real enemy is the War Wizard, who wants to discredit those who support Caladnei as Royal Magician. The heroes must tread carefully as they try to expose the well-connected wizard, exonerate the accused courtier, and discover who else at court the traitorous War Wizard has turned to his cause.

Murder at Court

The characters are called on to investigate a murder within the palace. However, they must do so using only their wits and experience, since weapons and magic are prohibited on palace grounds. An extended skill challenge or other type of roleplaying encounter allows the characters to flush out the killer. Complicating their efforts are nobles who want the characters to use their unfettered access in the palace to deliver messages to certain people, gather information, or distract important courtiers from their assigned tasks.

Portals Away

After discovering a strange relic of Cormyr's past, the heroes are invited to the palace. As they wander its halls, they find themselves stepping through a keyed portal that flares suddenly to life around them. The relic they carry is the secret key to the forgotten portal, which leads them to an ancient extradimensional space constructed by the legendary Sword Heralds—fanatical warriors sworn to guard the Obarskyr line.

King Foril's Court

In the Year of the Ageless One, the court of King Foril Obarskyr is a stable, bustling place. Thirty years into his reign, Foril rules over a peaceful kingdom. Cormyr's influence has expanded west and south around the Dragonmere, and Foril's courtiers are dedicated to increasing the prosperity of both the realm and its dependent territories.

THE FUTURE OF THE COURT

The information in this section establishes the Royal Court around Midwinter in the Year of the Ageless One (1479 DR), the period of the *Forgotten Realms® Campaign Guide*. Further insights regarding the court and its people during the reign of Foril Obarskyr can be found in the Ed Greenwood novels *Elminster Must Die* and *Bury Elminster Deep*.

Persons of the Royal Court

King Foril attempts to keep the most capable and trustworthy advisors close at hand, resulting in the frequent reassignment of officers and courtiers as he deems them better suited for other tasks. However, the important figures in his court remain more or less constant.

King Foril

His Royal Majesty King Foril Rhigaerd Dhalmass Obarskyr has ruled Cormyr since the death of his father thirty years ago. As a second son, Foril's youth was spent in scholarly pursuits, including a basic study of magic. Learning the structures and traditions of the Purple Dragons has shaped his opinion of Cormyr's military. The death of his brother and wife in the years preceding the wars with Sembia made Foril a deliberate, cautious ruler. Every action and decision must be made against the possibility that it might foment a war that Cormyr is not yet ready to fight.

Foril has actively molded the War Wizards into a more militant force than they were in generations past. His hope is that when war inevitably returns to Cormyr, the War Wizards will march side by side with the Purple Dragons as magic artillery, in addition to their accepted role as spies and agents fighting internal threats to the realm.

Approaching the end of his reign at age seventy, Foril nonetheless ignores numerous entreaties for him to abdicate in favor of his son, Irvel. Though the people see the crown prince as a heroic figure, Foril knows that the nobility view Irvel as naive and easily manipulated.

King Foril is patient with servants of the Crown whose loyalty is clear. However, that tolerance wanes when dealing with those who overstep their authority or presume to speak in his name. He is less generous with titles and praise than his father was, preferring instead to reward faithful nobles and courtiers with greater opportunities to serve the realm.

Crown Prince Irvel

Irvel Duar Palaghard Obarskyr is the son of King Foril and the late Princess Jemra, and the Crown Prince of the Forest Kingdom. A tall, bearded man who favors both the look and the boldness of the kings of old, Irvel is beloved of his people for his courage, his approachability, and his promise to build a brighter future for Cormyr.

Crown Prince Irvel is the high commander of Cormyr's military forces, though he does not hold the title of High Marshal. He loves—and is loved by—his wife, his children, his soldiers, and his nation. Some believe he will take the name of one of the former kings of Cormyr at his eventual coronation, hoping to reflect the devotion that the first Duar or Palaghard inspired in the inhabitants of the Forest Kingdom.

A kind, boisterous man, Irvel loves strong drink (though he is not prone to drunkenness) and the company of beautiful women. He has sworn that he will never break his vows of marriage to his wife of three decades. However, some whisper that Prince Irvel interprets the finer points of those vows more loosely than his father or grandfather.

The Princess Ospra

The Crown Prince's wife is the radiantly beautiful Ospra Goldfeather, daughter of a house that rises and falls in the Crown's favor every century or two. Though a skilled politician, the princess Ospra has little ability to manipulate her husband. However, she has become the darling of King Foril, who listens to her counsel nearly as readily as he does his own son's.

Princess Ospra is of the last branch of the Goldfeather house. Her father, Ordmann Goldfeather (called "Old Man Goldfeather" by most), his sister Adenia, and Adenia's children Maranth and Varauna are the last blood members of that august family of servants and traitors to the Crown.

Ospra remains largely quiet at court, even as her cold blue eyes watch everyone and everything. Many make the mistake of considering Ospra nothing more than a pretty plaything for her powerful husband, but she is as good an agent in the observation of noble treachery as any Highknight.

Like Queen Filfaeril of old, Ospra has managed to gather to her side loyal warriors and agents willing to serve Cormyr without expectation of recognition or reward. The princess is always seeking new recruits to her cause, and she expects that when her father-in-law finally meets his end, the number of those loyal to her will grow substantially.

Prince Baerovus

Only twenty-five years of age, Baerovus Azoun Obarskyr is the son of Crown Prince Irvel and Princess Ospra, and is second in the line of succession. A slim, meek young man, Baerovus hides his features behind his long hair whenever he is not making a public appearance with the royal family.

Baerovus enjoys his large stable of light horses (the Calimite is by far his favorite breed), and he is known to care for wounded animals he finds during royal hunts. The prince has no love for magic or for the battlefield. He is nearly useless with any blade longer than a hunting knife, though his skill with a bow is said to exceed that of anyone else in the royal family.

Baerovus does not relish the idea of ruling Cormyr. Though he will not abdicate if the crown falls to him, he secretly hopes that his father lives a long, healthy life, or that his or his sister's children become Irvel's heir, just as the fifth Azoun succeeded the fourth.

Princess Raedra

Not yet twenty, Princess Raedra Obarskyr is a figure of great interest to noble houses across Cormyr. The second child of Crown Prince Irvel and Princess Ospra, she is the first daughter born to House Obarskyr in more than a century. A woman of great beauty, she is said to possess the intellect of Tanalasta, the charm of Filfaeril, the strategy of Alusair, the temper of Gantharla, first Queen of Cormyr, and the sword-arm of Enchara the warrior queen. (The last is not strictly true, since Raedra prefers the rapier to heavier blades when training.)

The princess has already refused more than a dozen proposals of marriage or betrothal from courtiers both Cormyrian and foreign, most rejected with only a moment's thought. When pressed, she responds that she is not a prize for some noble or adventurer to win. She is a princess of Cormyr, in whom the royal lines of Esparin, Tethyr, and ancient Athalantar are joined. As such, she vows to wed only a husband worthy of her station, if not of her genuine love.

Solatha Boldtree, Countess of Dhedluk

Daughter of a traveling merchant known only as Boldtree (he shared his given name with no one, not even his daughter), Solatha is a stern-faced woman whose appearance has not improved with age. She looks less like a countess than a broad-shouldered tavernkeeper, though her green eyes shine with a kindness most miss on first glance.

If not for a fateful night in 1437, Solatha would be of no importance to the history of Cormyr. While leading a military expedition to the Vast Swamp, Foril's older brother Prince Emvar came across Solatha and her father's camp. The dashing prince and the merchant's daughter enjoyed one another's company before the Purple Dragons struck out again. It was not until months later, long after Emvar was slain in ambush, that Solatha realized she was carrying a royal child.

When her son Erzoured was born, Solatha brought him to the royal palace. There, after repeated confirmation through spell and prayer, the boy's paternity was confirmed. Azoun V invested Solatha as Countess of Dhedluk, after her birthplace.

Solatha still lives at court, but her relations with her son have become strained. Erzoured's secretive dealings have led his mother to believe that he will bring shame both to her and to his father's name.

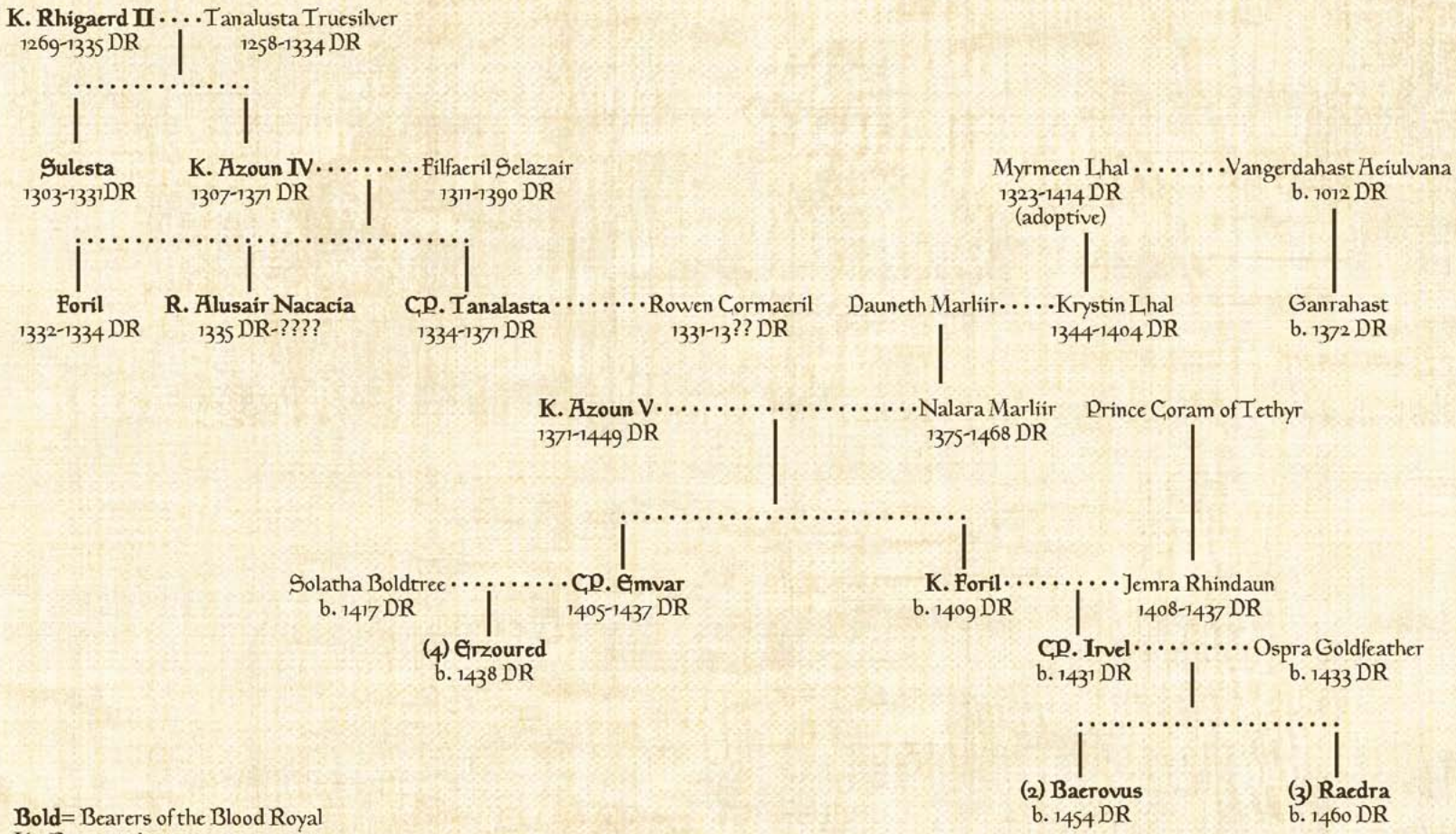
Lord Erzoured Obarskyr, Baron Boldtree

The son of the late Prince Emvar, Erzoured spent his early life in the royal palace, raised near his cousin Irvel but titled "lord" rather than "prince." Despite the confirmation of his birth, Erzoured was not officially recognized as Emvar's son until 1450 DR—after Foril had ascended the throne and ensured his own legacy.

Despite his luxurious upbringing, Erzoured is resentful of House Obarskyr. He styles himself Baron Boldtree to dissociate himself from the king,

The Royal Succession of Cormyr

as counted from the Year of the Hooded Falcon to the Year of the Ageless One



Bold= Bearers of the Blood Royal
K= Reigning king
R= Regent
CP= Crown Prince(ss), has not/never reigned
(#)= Number indicates current place in the royal succession (#1 is the current Crown Prince, Irvel)

seeing himself as the rightful heir to the Dragon Throne rather than fourth in line. The fact that Lord Erzoured is a traitor in waiting is known to the court, most of whose members suspect that he will strike at his uncle and seize the crown at the first opportunity.

Erzoured feigns affectation for his cousin Irvel, even as he secretly seeks useful allies in Sembia, Netheril, and Thay. However, he rebuffs advances from the leaders of those lands, wanting to rule Cormyr on his own terms rather than as a puppet king. Only his mother Solatha draws any true affection from Erzoured, but he has begun to suspect treachery even from her.

Ganrahast Aeiulvana, Royal Magician

The reigning Royal Magician of Cormyr has lived for over a century, though his red hair is only now beginning to edge with silver. Ganrahast has little of the presence of either of his parents, Vangerdahast Aeiulvana and Myrmeen Lhal. However, his ability to blend in allows him to learn more of the intentions of those around him than they are willing to reveal.

Ganrahast is a product of his upbringing in the time of the kingdom's Five Ladies, when Cormyr remembered that women could fight, hurl spells, and rule as capably as any man. Feeling unworthy of his title, Ganrahast constantly wonders if it is his lack of magical ability or the ghosts of those great women that haunt his failures.

Publicly, the Royal Magician is a different figure, confidently giving orders and directing the War Wizards as they defend Foril and his throne. His intellect is sharp and often morbid, letting him see threats most sane folk would not bother to consider. Thus far, his instincts have kept the realm secure. However, Ganrahast blames himself for the death of Princess Jemra, believing that one of his wards failed to protect her when an assassin's blade came seeking King Azoun V. He shares this guilt with no one, not even the Lord Warder.

Vainrence, Lord Warder

Ganrahast's second-in-command, closest friend, and the true leader of the War Wizards is the Lord Warder. Vainrence is a direct, honest man. He believes in serving Cormyr to the best of his abilities, not in soothing the egos of childish nobles or his War Wizard charges. A veteran of the wars with Sembia, he distinguished himself through the careful application of battle magic, his willingness to pick up a sword when necessary, and his understanding of tactics beyond the level of most War Wizards. King Foril took notice of those tactical abilities, which increased his standing until he was finally elevated to his current position by Ganrahast.

In his tenure at court, Vainrence has pushed King Foril to allow the War Wizards to live up to their name and take a more direct role in combat. Ganrahast remains unsure of this new direction, but the influence of the late Caladnei (who sought to increase the utility of the War Wizards to the Crown) has thus far kept him from reining Vainrence in.

Ossani Eveningspire, Sage Royal

Few would guess that the quiet, dark-haired woman of forty who serves as the Sage Royal is the great-granddaughter of Laspeera Naerinth. Although she possesses none of her ancestor's beauty or presence—and little of her magical talent—Ossani Eveningspire is a brilliant thinker with an incisive wit and a sharp tongue. Perhaps more than even the Royal Magician, Lady Eveningspire understands the importance of magic to the history of Cormyr, and the sacrifices that the realm's magical defenders have made for the kingdom.

The Sage Royal does her best to avoid matters of politics, leaving those to her sisters Aceeta Naerinth, Earilde Inthré, and Icaura Thralos. (Each sister chose a different family name from among those they inherited.) An exception to this rule is made for rumors regarding magic treasures of great age and unknown power, which prompt Ossani's undivided interest and attention.

OTHER COURTLY FACES

Many important courtiers do their best to stay out of the public eye, including a number of key advisors to King Foril.

Wizard of War Glathra Barcantle: A hardened senior War Wizard, Glathra's role as leader of that group sees her tolerate little back talk and even less equivocating to the authority of the Crown. She takes orders from no one short of Ganrahast, Lord Vainrence, or a blood Obarskyr, eagerly seeking any opportunity to prove herself in the eyes of King Foril.

King's Lord Lothan Durncaskyn of Immerford: A stern veteran of the Purple Dragons who has proved his loyalty and ability time and again, Durncaskyn is the lord of the crossing of the East Way over the Immerflow. He oversaw the building of Immerkeep, and dispenses justice in the king's name within its environs. One of the few people of the realm willing to speak frankly to the Crown and expect to be heard, he enjoys the absolute trust of King Foril and Crown Prince Irvel.

Peraps the Runner: A long, lean man in his late twenties, Peraps is neither a noble nor a courtier, but merely a messenger. He is trusted by the court to reliably and swiftly deliver messages and parcels anywhere in the realm, without the use of magic, portals, or other potentially corruptible methods. He does not work with known or suspected traitors to the kingdom, and he informs the Crown of any deliveries he has made that he suspects might be against Cormyr's interests.

Snarling Wolves Amid the Sheep

The court of King Foril is a more open place than the courts of previous monarchs. As a result, undesirable elements have made themselves comfortable among the nobles and courtiers of Suzail.

Ortwin Kolmar

This textiles merchant has grown wealthy selling his wares to the people of Akanûl, the Sword Coast, and the Moonsea. However, he stands to make himself even wealthier by reinvesting those mercantile profits in the true coin of the court: information. Kolmar holds secrets pertaining to nearly every field of trade or endeavor, and he is happy to arrange spying work for any capable characters willing to get their hands dirty. Though some people swear by Ortwin's usefulness, others avoid him for the disrepute that clings to him. Whatever business Ortwin Kolmar is involved in, chances are good that it breaks the law or borders on the treasonous.

For his own part, Kolmar sees himself not as a traitor to the realm but as a true entrepreneur, brokering deals among nobles and courtiers at a modest price. An inveterate coward with little stomach for battle, Kolmar faints at the sight of his own blood (use the human lackey from the *Monster Manual* for his statistics). When not at court with the Purple Dragons to guard him, he maintains a small army of mercenaries to defend against attack.

Saha Tovan

A towering figure in close-fitting chainmail with a massive sword strapped to her back, Saha Tovan is a tall, imposing woman with two related vocations. She hurts people she is paid to hurt, even as she makes others believe that they are next to be hurt if they fail to act appropriately. She enjoys the first job nearly as much as the second, and will gladly hire herself out to any noble, merchant, or caravan master willing to pay her exorbitant fee. Her only condition is that she not be asked to leave Cormyr under any circumstances.

Saha has spent the last few seasons in the employ of various noble houses, working one month for a given house, then the next for one of its rivals. Her goal is to threaten without actually making threats, and her menacing demeanor does the job well. Although she grows increasingly bored with politics, Tovan has never attacked any of her effete employers, who remind her that to draw her flaming blade against a noble would result in imprisonment or worse. However, it is likely only a matter of time before Saha is pushed beyond her limits and forced to pay the price.

Saha Tovan	**Level 12 Elite Brute**
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 1,400
HP 300; **Bloodied** 150	**Initiative** +10
AC 24; **Fortitude** 26; **Reflex** 24; **Will** 25	**Perception** +14
Speed 6	
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1	
Traits	
Whirlwind Charge	
When Saha charges a target, she can also use *flaming greatsword* against one other enemy adjacent to her as a free action after the charge.	
Triumphant Surge	
Saha gains 10 temporary hit points each time she bloodies an enemy or reduces an enemy to 0 or fewer hit points.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Flaming Greatsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +17 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).	
ǂ **Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: Saha Tovan uses *flaming greatsword* twice.	
Skills Endurance +16, Intimidate +15	
Str 22 (+12) **Dex** 18 (+10) **Wis** 16 (+9)	
Con 20 (+11) **Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 19 (+10)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Chondathan, Common	
Equipment chainmail, greatsword	

Court Intrigues

As has been the case with every ruler of Cormyr, King Foril faces constant plotting from the nobles and courtiers who surround his throne.

Advocates For Wheloon

Since their city was turned into a prison as punishment for their secret worship of Shar, the people of Wheloon have had few advocates fighting for their liberty. Recently, a small group of nobles, courtiers, and (most surprisingly) Chauntean and Lliiran priests have begun to petition the Crown to open the city. Not only were the Purple Dragons unable to prove that all the prisoners of Wheloon were Shar worshipers, a new generation of children born since that dark time might have a chance to escape the evil their parents embraced. For the city's advocates, it is better to free the innocent and expel the traitors than to allow the darkness of Wheloon to fester.

Falling Silver

In the last half-century, the fortunes of the three Silver families have shifted. Although the Crownsilvers and the Truesilvers maintain great wealth and influence, they are no longer ascendant stars among Cormyr's nobility. The Huntsilvers have fared worse, first losing their sons in the Sembian wars, then seeing their last two daughters married into Houses Crownsilver and Truesilver. They hope to restore the family name by the production of heirs. However, neither daughter has yet borne a child, and time is running out.

Parceling Out the Stonelands

King Azoun IV maintained a promise to grant the title of Baron of the Stonelands to any prospective noble able to pacify and hold that region for more than a year. For over a century, this claim has gone untested. As such, a number of lesser noble families, unable to purchase lands in the heart of Cormyr, have begun to press the Crown for permission and funds to

construct castles in the Stonelands. What better way to defend and expand the realm, they argue, than by turning that rock-strewn wasteland into verdant fields in the name of the Dragon Throne?

Rage Over Irlingstar

Following the rise of Gondegal, the defeat of the Tuigan Horde, and the perfidy of Houses Bleth and Cormaeril, Royal Magician Vangerdahast secretly ordered the construction of a fortified prison in the most remote corner of the Thunder Peaks. Known as Irlingstar, this prison has been home to some of the most dangerous noble traitors in Cormyr, who are held in permanent exile for fear of their return. Azoun V used the prison only rarely, though Foril made extensive use of it during his early reign.

Named for the Waterdhavian noble family that initially intended it as a stopover for Sembian trade, House Irlingstar divested themselves of the castle because of its remote site, demanding that the Crown of Cormyr keep the name as a condition of its low sale price. Ironically, Irlingstar was also the name of the first resident of the prison, a malaugrym that had masqueraded as the wife of Lord Irlingstar. She fled Waterdeep on the discovery of her treachery and was captured, briefly, by the War Wizards. Being ageless, "Lady Irlingstar" plotted for decades, and eventually escaped from her jailers.

Word has slowly crept out (aided by the whispers of the former Lady Irlingstar) of the "special jail" for nobles maintained by the Crown, protected by no fewer than five dozen war wizards. Whether this is rumor or not is unproven, but the fury expressed by nobles who hear of the prison is in every way genuine.

Word has slowly leaked out of the existence of Irlingstar, the nobles imprisoned there, and the powerful magic wards and War Wizards that protect the prison. Most people treat Irlingstar as legend, but the fury of the nobles who have heard of it—and their anger toward Foril for his complicity in its operation—is in every way genuine.

Wizardly Whispers

A growing rumor spreads among the workers and functionaries of the palace and court, stating that an impossibly ancient wizard (variably human, elf, or undead) lurks within the halls of the palace disguised as a member of the court. After using magic to feign age, then infirmity, this supposed wizard "dies." He or she then takes on the guise of the child, cousin, or other false relative who purports to claim the body, and who subsequently takes up the dead wizard's place at court. At least three different families are rumored to be the source of this dark tale, some of whose members have begun gathering evidence of the others' guilt.

Threats

Cormyr has endured the Spellplague and its aftermath, including the changes to Toril. The threats to the kingdom have changed as well, and might yet succeed in shattering the peace of Foril's court.

Acquiescing to the Shadow

In every generation, nobles arise who are swayed more by coin than sense. In the most recent generation, a number of nobles—even after two wars and continued threats—believe that Cormyr should take in more Sembian gold and allow for greater trade and cooperation with Netheril. The Crown is thankful that these cries have not yet come from the heads of any prominent families. However, it is only a matter of time before the corruption that comes with Sembian gold once again darkens the discourse of the Royal Court.

Banker of Rumors

Despite the best efforts of the War Wizards and the Highknights at court, a rumor broker has infiltrated the highest circles of society. This unknown agent has begun to sell the secrets of the Silver families, other noble houses, and powerful merchants to the highest bidder. When such secrets do not exist, this shadowy figure is happy to manufacture them, leading to more than one incident of drawn blades at a noble revel. These lies will soon lead to bloodshed, and Ganrahast wants the culprit found and stopped.

Baron Boldtree

Rumors persist that the king's nephew plots open rebellion at every turn. Though Lord Erzoured is thankfully patient in his treachery, these rumors have begun to foment dissent across the realm. Second and third noble heirs, forcibly retired Purple Dragons, and merchants whose petitions for nobility have been refused are becoming more brazen in their defiance of the Dragon Throne. Determined, motivated, and dangerously influential, these individual factions have yet to coalesce into a unified whole. However, a lack of leadership makes their actions even more unpredictable.

Lingering Plague

The sheer number of wards, protective spells, and other magic imbued into the halls of the palace and the royal court makes walking certain little-used corridors a dangerous proposition. Though the Royal Magician has tamed the lingering effects of the Spellplague, this does not stop members of the noble families from hurling accusations at rival houses every time stray magic is unleashed.

Magical Tutoring

In violation of Ganrahast's express command, two noble houses—Dracohorn and Huntcrown—have imported wizardly tutors to instruct their children in the use of magic. Though it is not unheard of for a noble house to privately train a child with magical talent, the Royal Magician fears that these foreign mages (one from Calimshan; the other from Thay) will corrupt the children, steal the secrets of the houses, or otherwise jeopardize the realm. Ganrahast has yet to

decide on a formal response, but he and his servants are on a course of confrontation that might embroil these noble houses in conflict with the Crown.

Adventure Hooks

King Foril's Cormyr is little different from the realms of previous kings. Nobles plot treason, merchants plot ascension to noble rank, and loyal servants strive to protect the kingdom from threats both real and imagined.

Beneath the Palace

A missing courtier is in possession of a document the heroes need to convince the War Wizards of a merchant's criminal behavior. The characters must brave the complex, winding tunnels connecting the Royal Court with the palace. While exploring the tunnels, they must eliminate a host of plaguechanged creatures whose presence is disrupting the ancient wards protecting the palace.

Prison Escort

The characters are tasked by the court with escorting a noble prisoner to Irlingstar, only to be ambushed along the way by mercenaries in the noble's employ. The warriors only want to parley, however, and produce evidence of the noble's innocence. The heroes must decide whether to continue with their mission or to free the noble, and how to present this evidence to the appropriate authorities.

Revelry Interrupted

Invited to a noble banquet and revel at the palace in honor of their service to the Crown, the characters are in the right place at the right time to prevent an attack on the guests. By means of a series of social skill challenges, they must then root out the villains responsible for the attack without alerting the guilty party to their investigation.

The Palace and the Court

On the rising north slopes of Suzail stands the sprawling complex that is the Royal Court, with the palace above it. Within these two massive, interconnected structures, much of the wealth and influence of the Forest Kingdom resides. On any day of the year, some of the most influential people in Faerûn can be found here, discussing the future of the realm.

Information on the city of Suzail, its current leadership, and citywide events can be found in "Backdrop: Suzail" in this issue of *Dungeon*.

The Royal Palace of Suzail

Castle Obarskyr, also known as the Palace of the Purple Dragon, Faerlthann's Keep, or most often "the palace," overlooks the city of Suzail. What was once the manor of Ondeth Obarskyr—founder of the realm and father of Faerlthann "First King"—was expanded into a fortified keep during his son's reign. Ondeth's grandson, Rhiiman "the Glorious," completed the keep's transformation into a proper castle.

The palace's buildings and stone towers now form a grand, expansive complex that is home to the most important treasures and people in Cormyr. With more than a hundred halls, rooms, and chambers (to say nothing of corridors, secret passages, armories, vaults, and kitchens), the palace is one of the largest and most complex structures in the kingdom. In addition to being the permanent residence of House Obarskyr, the palace contains apartments for the royal Silver families, key staff, and guard barracks for the Purple Dragons permanently stationed here.

Most people see the palace only from the outside. Admittance is by invitation only, except for knights and nobles of the realm, senior officers of the Purple Dragons, and courtiers on official business. Even then, an invited character's escorts and companions are subject to scrutiny, search, and possible detention by the guards and War Wizards on duty.

King Azoun V ordered the filling in and covering of portions of Lake Azoun (which still drains into the Lake of Dragons by means of underground culverts). Foril has expanded the palace westward, absorbing the older buildings there and raising new structures to supplement the complex.

In the last century, the older sections of the palace have become known for the failure of their ancient magical wards. The site of hauntings, disappearances, and other strange events, the buildings east of Faerlthann's Keep have been dubbed "the haunted wing."

The Royal Court

As closed off as the palace is, the Royal Court—or at least its outer chambers—are open to all citizens and visitors to the realm. The court is where the main business of the kingdom is conducted. Here, adventuring charters are granted, business and trade licenses requested, nobles raised or divested, oaths sworn before the Crown, state funerals held, and the public business of Cormyr conducted and witnessed.

The Royal Court is a busy, bustling place full of courtiers of every rank, visiting nobles, embassies from other nations, and common citizens. All rub elbows in the hope of getting closer to the throne and the influence it represents. The Royal Court is where the kingdom's laws are pronounced, policies shaped, and edicts proclaimed. With the exception of certain secret or violent deeds, the most important events in Cormyr happen here.

Centered around the Chamber of the Purple Dragon, the Royal Court stands off the promenade and fills the space between the gates and the palace. Like the palace, the court features many chambers with myriad functions, including its own kitchens, armory, and duty barracks. Craft workshops of various kinds are also found here, as are the laboratories

in which the War Wizards conduct experiments that Ganrahast has forbidden within the palace proper.

The court is connected to the palace by means of tunnels beneath the two complexes, a trio of flying bridges between the newest buildings, and a single ground-level wing at the eastern end of the court. Official records of the realm are stored at the court, in duplicate at two separate locations. Additional copies of the most important documents are secured in a third, underground vault.

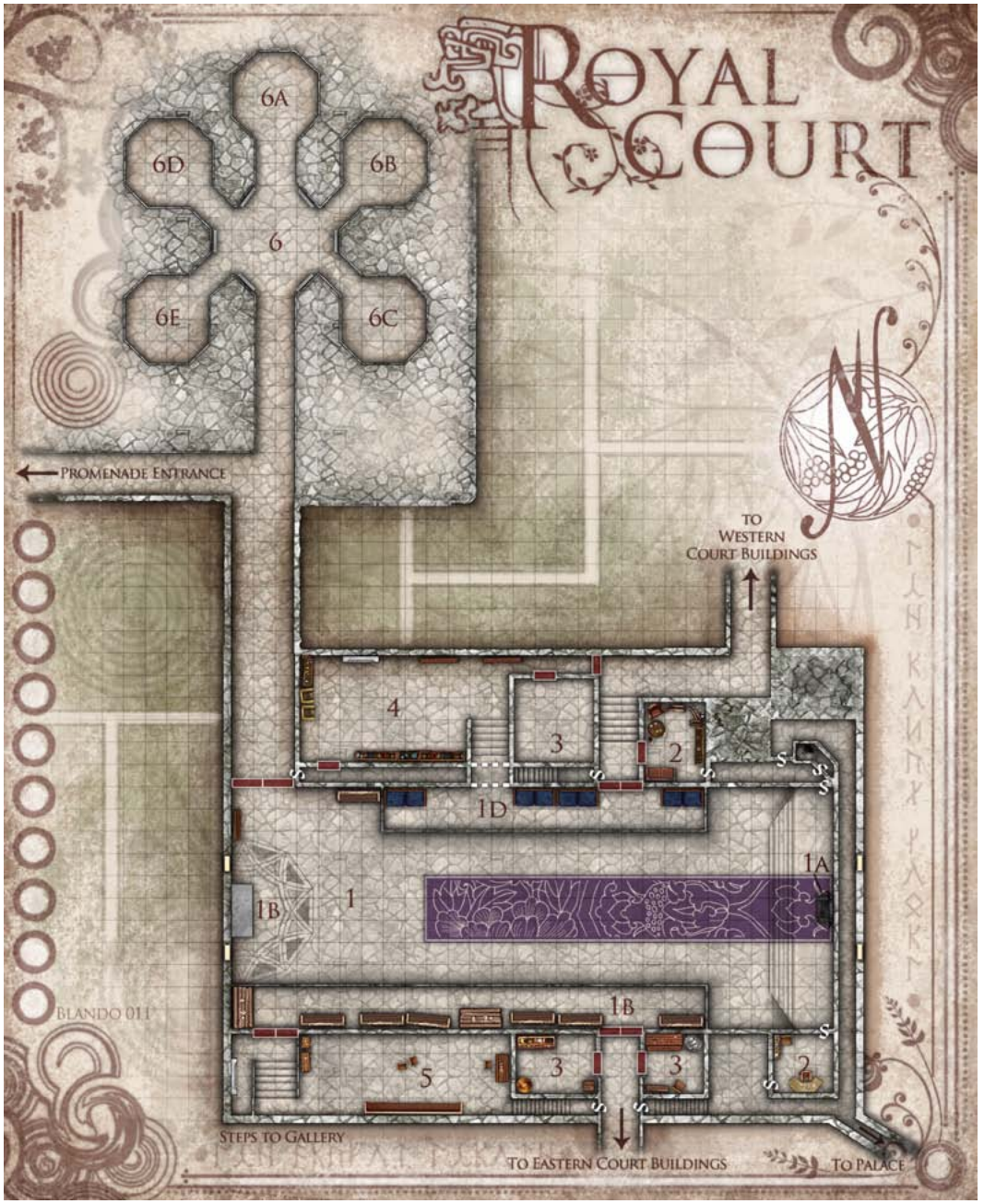
The Chamber and the Shrine

In the center of the court off the promenade stands the Chamber of the Purple Dragon. Built as a grand meeting hall by Ondeth before Cormyr was a nation, the chamber was converted by King Faerlthann into his throne room. When the Dragon Throne was completed, it was placed on a raised dais on the northern wall of the hall, where it has remained for more than a millennium.

1. Chamber of the Purple Dragon: The Chamber of the Purple Dragon is one of the oldest human-built sites in Cormyr. The throne room of the realm, it is the location for ceremonies of investiture, royal proclamations, weddings, and funerals. Thick curtains along the walls hide secret doors that royals can use to escape danger. War Wizards and Highknights frequently use these doors to sneak into the throne room and watch for potential threats.

1A. Throne of the Purple Dragon: Standing taller than any knight, the Dragon Throne is a dark, imposing seat carved in the likeness of a great wyrm. No one but the king can sit in this seat, and even the most powerful nobles approach its dais with reverence.

1B. Tomb of Baerauble: Beneath two tall, slender windows rests the simple stone tomb of Baerauble, the first Royal Magician of Cormyr. Guarded at all times by two Purple Dragons of rank and



distinction, the tomb has been worn smooth by the hands of people coming to pray for guidance from the old wizard. A saying attributed to Baerauble is magically inscribed along the lip of the tomb, neither fading nor wearing away despite the long years: "The gods do not grant to us all the shining mantle of hero. Do what you can, and it will be enough."

1C. Eastern Gallery: Reserved for nobles viewing events in the Chamber of the Purple Dragon, this gallery is appointed with comfortable couches that stand pointedly unused—since no noble is foolish enough to sit in the presence of the Dragon Throne. Weapons and magic items of any kind are stripped from their bearers when they pass through the side chamber (area 5). Such belongings are given back when a noble returns to the main chamber.

1D. Western Gallery: People other than nobles can view events in the Chamber of the Purple Dragon from the western gallery. Space is limited, however, and most viewers are relegated to the floor of the throne room.

2. Robing Rooms: Only members of the royal family, their attendants, and their invited guests can enter these chambers, which are guarded by Purple Dragons and War Wizards. Both of these rooms have secret doors connecting them to the Chamber of the Purple Dragon, as well as exits to a passage leading back to the palace.

3. Retiring Rooms: These small, comfortable lounges are appointed with lushly upholstered furniture and fine paintings. They are used by the Crown to separate feuding factions and prevent them from distracting the court from its business. Fuming nobles recognize the insult of being placed in one of these rooms. The worst offenders are often further inconvenienced by the presence of spare furniture, cloying lesser nobles, or creditors invited by the Crown.

4. Side Chamber (Common): People without rank arriving early for a court function wait in this chamber until guests are permitted upstairs to the western gallery (area 1D). Such characters will have had weapons and magic confiscated on initially entering the court, so that the Purple Dragons in this chamber are less strident regarding searches.

5. Side Chamber (Noble): Only characters of rank are permitted into this room. It contains no furniture except for a few wall torches, a chest to lock away confiscated weapons or magic items , and a pair of simple benches for nobles who have challenged the guards for any reason and been struck senseless. The stairway in this area leads to the eastern gallery (area 1C).

6. Shrine of the Four Swords: The shrine is home to Cormyr's four swords of state, the weaponry of the nation's regalia. Unlike with the throne, crowns, and rods of the realm, people are allowed to approach the weapons of Cormyr openly. However, attempting to remove the crystal domes covering the plinths on which the weapons rest calls forth guards, War Wizards, and an ear-piercing alarm.

Benches line the central chamber of the shrine, allowing visitors to rest in contemplation. When a member of the royal family dies, his or her body lies in state here in accordance with the family's wishes.

For the history, uses, and magical properties of the weapons housed in the Shrine of the Four Swords, see "Swords of State: Cormyr" in *Dragon* 407.

6A. Guard Station: Four Purple Dragons stand on duty here, ready to prevent anyone from desecrating or stealing from the Shrine. Any swords displaced while bodies lie in state in the shrine rest here on simple stands during the mourning period.

6B. Shrine of Orblyn: The sword Orblyn is known as the Edge of Justice. Its shrine has no decoration except for a pair of torn cloths hanging from each corner: one red, the other black.

6C. Shrine of Rissar: The walls of the shrine of the Wedding Blade are hung with small, seemingly valueless mementoes of royal courtship. Handkerchiefs, feathers, locks of hair, and nearly forty purple scarves each commemorate a different Obarskyr marriage.

6D. Shrine of Ansrivarr: The oldest of the four swords of Cormyr, Ansrivarr lies beneath the heraldic shields of the four royal houses of Obarskyr, Crownsilver, Truesilver, and Huntsilver. The shield of House Huntsilver has been hung askew to indicate the uncertain status of that house. The shield of House Bleth hangs here as well, covered with a black sheet to indicate that family's treachery and present exile.

6E. Shrine of Symylazarr: The blade called Cormyr's Fount of Honor rests in a clean, bare room. Unlike the other swords of state, Symylazarr is never found in its sheath, to better show off its finely etched blade. Directly across from the shrine's entrance, the armorial shield of the last knight or noble house to be raised by the Crown hangs above the plinth on which Symylazarr rests.

A Partial Timeline of Cormyr

It would be impossible to recount every significant event in Cormyr's history. However, a brief examination of happenings between the courts of the Steel Regent and King Foril can provide insight into the Royal Court and its inhabitants.

1371 DR: Year of the Unstrung Harp
Birth of Azoun V of Cormyr. Death of Azoun IV and Crown Princess Tanalasta. Beginning of the Steel Regency of Princess Alusair Nacacia.

1373 DR: Year of Rogue Dragons
Birth of Ganrahast, son of Vangerdahast Aeiulvana and Myrmeen Lhal.

1379 DR: Year of the Lost Keep
Four Day War between Cormyr and the Empire of Netheril.

1384 DR: Year of Three Streams Blooded
At the insistence of several members of court and the young king, Azoun V is crowned King of Cormyr. The Steel Regency ends. Alusair is named High Marshal of Cormyr, but spends most of her time in the Stonelands and the west reaches. Without the political support of his aunt, many of Azoun's early reforms—including attempts to curtail the rights of the nobility—fail.

1385 DR: Year of Blue Fire
The Spellplague begins with the murder of Mystra. Roughly one third of Cormyr's Wizards of War are slain, driven mad, or go missing in the year following Mystra's death.

1390 DR: Year of the Walking Man
Death of the Dowager Dragon Queen Filfaeril. Alusair attends the state funeral, argues briefly and privately with her nephew the king, then disappears from court. Rumors of her riding the frontiers and borderlands are heard in later years, but Alusair is never officially seen again.

1392 DR: Year of the Scroll
The Dragon Coast city of Pros petitions the Crown to become a vassal-state of Cormyr to protect it from the ravages of the Spellplague. By year's end, Pros's sister-town of Ilipur joins the Forest Kingdom as well.

1394 DR: Year of Deaths Unmourned
The worst symptoms of the Spellplague subside. Cormyr emerges relatively unharmed, though not unchanged.

1396 DR: Year of the Secret
Marriage of King Azoun V to Nalara Marliir, the daughter of Lord High Marshal Dauneth Marliir and Krystin Lhal.

1397 DR: Year of the Quill
After years of struggle against the rule of Netheril, the border city of Daerlun is annexed into the Forest Kingdom.

1399 DR: Year of the Fallen Friends
Caladnei, Royal Magician and Court Wizard of Cormyr, succumbs to age and the lingering effects of the Spellplague. Following her death, Laspeera Inthré, one of the few surviving wizards from the days of Vangerdahast, assumes the post of Court Wizard and begins tutoring Ganrahast to adopt the duties of royal Magician.

1400 DR: Year of Lost Ships
The Alliance of Freesailors formally disbands, with the ships of each kingdom (Cormyr, Sembia and Impiltur) committing themselves to their nations rather than the general opposition of piracy.

1405 DR: Year of the Golden Mask
Birth of Emvar Obarskyr, first son of Azoun V and Queen Nalara.

1407 DR: Year of the Halls Unhaunted
The year opens with rumors of a complete clearing of the fabled Haunted Halls of Eveningstar. A dozen adventuring companies are wiped out in the year that follows, leading to a formal proclamation forbidding entry to the halls without an explicit warrant from the Crown.

1408 DR: Year of the Solitary Cloister
Following the lead of Daerlun a decade earlier, Urmlaspyr offers its allegiance to the Dragon Throne.

1409 DR: Year of True Omens
Birth of Foril Obarskyr, second son of Azoun V and Queen Nalara.

1414 DR: Year of Sea Lions Roaring
Azoun V restores loyal elements of the once-exiled House Cormaeril to the nobility.

1422 DR: Year of the Advancing Shadows
The city of Elversult, feeling increasing pressure from Cormyr's control of its source ports of Pros and Ilipur, becomes a protectorate of the realm.

1428 DR: Year of the Elfqueen's Joy
The city of Teziir, close to collapse after decades of struggle against Cormyrian-controlled rival cities, accepts the rule of the Forest Kingdom. Cormyr now controls all lands and ports surrounding the Dragonmere.

1430 DR: Year of Stalking Horrors
Marriage of Foril Obarskyr to Jemra Rhindaun, of the Royal House of Tethyr.

1431 DR: Year of the Lashing Tail
Birth of Irvel Obarskyr to Prince Foril and Princess Jemra.

1433 DR: Year of the Silent Departure
With their magical defenses failing and their former home restored, the elven clans Alastrarra and Ildacer leave the sea elf kingdom of Naramyr beneath the Dragonmere, returning to Myth Drannor.

1437 DR: Year of the Silent Flute
Years of low-grade conflict between Sembia and Cormyr lead to the death of Crown Prince Emvar in an ambush south of the Vast Swamp. In the same month, Princess Jemra is killed in a failed assassination attempt against Azoun V by Sembian factions. As the people grieve, calls for decisive action against Netheril and Sembia sweep across Cormyr.

1438 DR: Year of Silent Waterfalls
Royal Magician Ganrahast discovers that before Emvar's death, the prince fathered a son, Erzoured, with a merchant's daughter named Solatha. Erzoured and his mother are brought to the palace. Solatha is created Countess of Dhedluk, after her birthplace, to ensure that Erzoured will have a title to inherit despite his illegitimate birth.

1439 DR: Year of the Silent Tear
Years of tension, negotiation, and skirmish between Cormyr and Sembia erupt to all-out war.

1441 DR: Year of Resurrections Rampant
A peace treaty is drafted between Netherese Sembia and Cormyr, Cormanthor, and the Dalelands. The Huntsilver noble family has been all but exterminated by the end of the conflict, its remaining two daughters marrying into the Houses of Crownsilver and Truesilver. As part of the Treaty of Griffonfang Bridge, the cities of Daerlun and Urmlaspyr are declared independent from both Cormyr and Sembia.

1442 DR: Year of Darkenbeasts Rising
Azoun V restores the Goldfeather family to nobility.

1448 DR: Year of Neomen Swords
Marriage of Prince Irvel to Ospra Goldfeather.

1449 DR: Year of the Godly Invitation
Death of King Azoun V. Coronation of King Foril.

1454 DR: Year of the Emerald Sun
Birth of Baerovus Obarskyr, son of Crown Prince Irvel and his wife, Ospra Goldfeather.

1460 DR: Year of the Malachite Shadows
Birth of Raedra Obarskyr, daughter of Crown Prince Irvel and Princess Ospra.

1469 DR: Year of Splendors Burning
Under the pretense of protecting Proskur from the shadowy hand of Netheril, Cormyr declares the burgeoning city a protectorate of the Dragon Throne.

1473 DR: Year of the Heretic's Rampage
In the face of unprecedented activity by the faithful of Shar in Wheloon, alongside evidence of their alliance with Netheril, King Foril orders the city sealed and turned into a prison colony.

1479 DR: Year of the Ageless One
The present day of the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*.

About the Author

Brian Cortijo is a freelance game designer and fiction author who has been playing in the back roads and underhalls of Cormyr for years, and is thrilled to finally bring some of that work to light. His thanks, as always, go out to Ed Greenwood for the Realms, and for letting him play in the sandbox.

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"The brightest jewel of Cormyr's crown."
—Olaurae, sage of Myth Drannor (855 DR)

Behold Suzail, seat of royal power! The armies of the Purple Dragon have turned back hordes, slain dragons, and faced the might of empire. Even now, fourteen centuries after its founding, Cormyr stands as powerful as ever.

Behold Suzail, city of prosperity! The wealth of a nation flows through its streets. Coins pour through the hands of merchants. Fortunes are made here as the nobles spend their treasure freely.

Behold Suzail, cultural heart of Cormyr! It is here that the nobles gather in the Royal Court. Their fashions, galas, and entertainments set the standard for the nation. The arts of Suzail are the vanguard of culture in Cormyr.

Behold Suzail, bastion of arcane might! The War Wizards of Cormyr are renowned throughout the Realms for their loyal service to the Crown. The names Vangerdahast and Caladnei are still synonymous with power and loyalty to Cormyr.

Behold Suzail, and see its greatness!

The capital city of Cormyr is a bustling, prosperous place. It's always afire with new ideas, new ventures, new goods, and new ways to do things. The presence of the Royal Court, the War Wizards, and the noble

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houses of Cormyr make Suzail an exciting destination. Adventurers can be swept up in the intrigues of the nobles, participate in the many festivals and tournaments, or just enjoy the vast spectrum of entertainment available in a royal city.

Census

According to the official city rosters, 55,000 residents make Suzail their home, but the day-to-day population is certainly higher. The city is overwhelmingly human (approximately 85 percent of the population), with halflings and half-elves (about 10 percent together) making up the next largest populations. Dwarves, elves, eladrin, and gnomes make up the remainder. Races with evil legacies, such as drow, tieflings, and half-orcs, are not attacked on sight but are watched carefully by the Purple Dragons (royal soldiers) and War Wizards who enforce the law. Many times, the authorities use out-of-uniform agents or adventurers to tail members of these races and ensure their good behavior.

Since the Spellplague, many unusual races have appeared in the Realms. In particular, dragonborn are seen as an honorable race and are welcomed into Suzail.

Government

Suzail is the seat of power for His Royal Highness Foril Obarskyr, who rules from the ancestral throne in the Royal Palace. King Foril delegates day-to-day administration to the Lord Magister, who maintains the peace, collects the taxes, administers the city services, and commands the garrison of Purple Dragons. The Lord Magister is assisted by a herald who maintains all the paperwork for Suzail, including tax records, licenses, and property deeds. Together, they handle their governing duties at the Royal Court, and the military aspects of the magister's duties are centered at the Citadel of the Purple Dragons and the Lockup.

The current Lord Magister is Edwin Morahan, a paladin. He is a middle-aged human and a veteran of the Purple Dragons. He acquitted himself well during the conflict with Sembia and in the years that followed. When he retired from the Dragons, the Crown rewarded him with this post. His loyalty to the throne is beyond reproach, but his military bearing and his desire for efficiency and decisive action chafes the members of the Royal Court. Morahan's primary goal as Lord Magister is to institutionalize the changes to the government of the city that were set forth in the Suzail Writ. Although he considers this merely an act of upholding royal decree, his perceived favoritism for commoners has earned him many political enemies among the nobility who are attempting to force him from his position. His friendship with Vainrence, second in command of the War Wizards, and the constant work of Eleanor Thond, his herald, help keep Morahan's position secure for the immediate future.

Lady Eleanor Thond, a female human bard, is a beautiful and intelligent courtier with an eye for detail. She comes from a merchant family outside Arabel and is intensely ambitious. Through diplomatic skill, unrelenting drive, and more than a little luck (she is a devout follower of Tymora), Thond rose through the ranks of the courtiers and was named Morahan's herald, which gave her a noble's rank. She has the subtle touch that Lord Morahan lacks, and she often follows in his wake, smoothing over matters. Unmarried, she has a soft spot for dashing young men and loves the ideals of courtly romance. Thond hopes to marry into one of the great noble houses in Cormyr one day. She would consider undermining Morahan's hold on his position as Lord Magister in return for joining a noble house. However, she genuinely likes Morahan, and she would not desert him unless the offer was too good to refuse.

Also of great importance in the governance of the city is Ganrahast, the Royal Magician and chairman of the College of War Wizards. His top lieutenant is Vainrence. Through their command of the War Wizards, they wield enormous political power in the city. These two wizards are covered in the article "Cormyr Royale: The Royal Court of the Forest Kingdom."

Military

As the capital of Cormyr, Suzail is well fortified and heavily garrisoned. An 80-foot-high curtain wall protects the city on all landward fronts. The strategically placed Royal Palace has a commanding view of the entire city, and the extensive Citadel of the Purple Dragons anchors the southeastern corner of Suzail. In addition, the Horngate, the Field Gates, and the Eastgate are minor citadels in their own right and guard the entrances to the city. Spies and criminals rarely sneak into Suzail over the walls. Instead, they rely on disguises to bluff their way through the gates. Each gatehouse keeps a thick logbook of known spies and other persons who are banned from entering the city.

Suzail boasts a garrison of about two thousand Purple Dragons housed in the citadel that bears their name and in auxiliary barracks around the city walls. Approximately one hundred War Wizards supplement these soldiers and provide arcane support. The Purple Dragons and the War Wizards constantly drill in the courtyard of the citadel, keeping themselves and their tactics in top fighting shape. In recent years, the Purple Dragons have begun hiring chartered adventuring parties to test the skills of their patrols, since adventurers are notoriously resourceful and unpredictable. Killing blows are not permitted in these tests, but nearly everything else is allowed. If any adventurers succeed in besting a patrol, the city offers the victors a small reward (and the patrol gets latrine duty, so its members are highly motivated to win).

City of
Suzail
N
Blanco II

Since the Spellplague, the Imperial Navy has relocated the bulk of its fleet from Marsember to Suzail. More than a score of ships and their crews (known as Blue Dragons) now call the Royal Docks their home port. Since the lowering of the sea level, the navy has shifted to smaller ships with a shallower draft. These vessels are ideal for fighting the many pirates that roam the Dragonmere. The Blue Dragons offer bounties for information on pirates and sometimes hire chartered adventurers for extra muscle when hunting a particularly dangerous ship.

The navy takes great pride in its two most famous vessels. *Crown of Cormyr* is a veritable floating palace, used by the royal family to relax away from the eyes of the court or to entertain guests in secret. *Dragon*, Cormyr's largest warship and the fourth to have this name, is well equipped with ballistae and firepot hurlers.

KEY TO MAP LOCATIONS

A high-resolution version of the map on page 3 is available for download from the D&D website.

1. Royal Palace
2. Royal Court
3. Tower of the Royal Magician
4. Lake Azoun
5. The Silent Room (Temple to Oghma)
6. Shrine to Tempus
7. Eastgate
8. Shrine to Malar
9. Rowanmantle Castle
10. Greatgaunt Estate
11. Cormaeril Compound
12. Dracohorn Mansion
13. Huntcrown Estate
14. College of War Wizards
15. Emmarsk Mansion
16. Huntsilver House (empty)
17. Alsevir Estate
18. Hawklin House
19. Goldfeather Estate
20. Dauntinghorn House
21. Illance House
22. Royal Gardens
23. Truesilver Castle
24. Marliir Mansion
25. Crownsilver Castle
26. House of Lord Magister Edwin Morahan
27. House of Lady Eleanor Thond
28. Monument to the Purple Dragon
29. Skatterhawk family house
30. Delcastle Manor
31. Horngate
32. Wailing Wheel (inn)
33. Six Candles (inn)
34. Dragonriders' Club (club)
35. Witch-Duke's Bride (tavern)
36. The Myrmidon (inn)
37. Promenade
38. Dragon's Jaws (inn)
39. Bindle's (club)
40. The Royal Smithy
41. Society of Stalwart Adventurers (club)
42. Temple of Good Fortune
43. The Nightgate Inn (inn)
44. Dragoneye Dealing Coster yards
45. Thousandheads Trading Coster yards
46. Seven Suns Trading Coster yards
47. Six Coffers Trading Coster yards
48. Shrine to Milil
49. Shrine to Lliira
50. The Market Hall
51. Taverant's Tellings
52. The Lockup
53. Citadel of the Purple Dragons
54. Royal Docks
55. Harbor Tower
56. The Market Yard
57. Laughing Lass (tavern)
58. The Osculatory (club)
59. Ring of Coins (shop)

Law and Justice

Due to the vigilance of the Purple Dragons, Suzail is one of the safest cities in the Realms. Three hundred royal soldiers patrol the streets at any given time, operating in groups of three. When confronting a significant threat, two Purple Dragons approach while the third retrieves reinforcements. In times of trouble, patrol sizes are doubled or tripled and supplemented with War Wizards. Furthermore, the Purple Dragons enforce a late-night curfew. Anyone on the street after midnight can expect an interrogation. Licenses that allow individuals to break curfew are available, but such licensees get an escort of at least one Purple Dragon patrol.

In Suzail, organized crime is not as much of a threat as it is in other large cities. Like his predecessors, King Foril vigorously puts down attempts to form thieves' guilds and smuggling cabals. Of course, these efforts do not deter all would-be criminals. Suzail is a rich city, and the lack of competition from other unsavory organizations beckons to those with larcenous hearts.

Historically, the War Wizards have magically monitored the thoughts and intentions of Cormyr's citizenry to ensure that laws were upheld and to counter threats to the kingdom. However, the Spellplague, royal sentiment, and the Suzail Writ have conspired to greatly limit their ability to do so. After several attempts at mind-reaming resulted in the messy deaths of nobles and the drooling feeblemindedness of the wizards involved, the Crown banned the use of the practice on any citizen of Cormyr. The War Wizards still try to spy on everyone, but their methods are less invasive—and less effective. This development has not pleased a few War Wizards who are researching new rituals to read minds. Since failure could result in death or madness, the wizards seek third parties to test the ritual on undesirables who won't be missed.

Near the end of his reign, Azoun V signed the Suzail Writ, which gave all free citizens of Cormyr inviolable rights, most notably the right to a trial by a jury of peers. In Cormyr, the law requires the accused to respond to the charges and the accuser to substantiate them, leaving guilt or innocence in question until the trial is concluded. The local lord acts as the judge, and a Purple Dragon stands as the accuser of someone arrested for criminal activities. Due to the sheer volume of trials in Suzail, an officer of the Royal Court represents Lord Magister Morahan. Under the Suzail Writ, the judge manages the trial through a series of interrogatories, and the jury delivers the verdict. A losing party can appeal to the Crown, which might reject the plea, designate a minister to hear the appeal, or have the king hear the appeal personally. Nobles can demand to be tried either by the king or by a jury of their noble peers.

THE CLACK ON SUZAIL

Characters who make a successful skill check know the following information about Suzail.

History DC 10: Suzail is the capital city of Cormyr and the seat of royal power. The king rules from the Royal Palace, and the nobles and courtiers operate from the Royal Court. The court is renowned as a hotbed of intrigue and gossip.

History DC 15: Lord Magister Edwin Morahan, a paladin and a veteran Purple Dragon, handles the day-to-day governance of the city. His herald is Lady Eleanor Thond, a beautiful and well-connected courtier.

History DC 20: King Foril is very advanced in years. The succession of his son Prince Irvel seems to be guaranteed, but a change in monarch is always a dangerous time in Cormyr. The Obarskyrs have many offshoots, and Cormyr's history is littered with succession struggles.

Religion DC 10: The largest temple in Suzail is the Towers of Good Fortune, which is dedicated to Tymora. The priests of Lady Luck are always willing to help adventurers with spells and rituals.

Religion DC 15: The Silent Room was dedicated to Deneir but is now sanctified to Oghma. The Silent Room is renowned for its library, which contains many rare texts. Although the collection is not as robust as that of Candlekeep, it is not as remote, and visitors can use the library for a small fee.

Religion DC 20: The Silent Room has become the center of the Oghmanyte Church in Exile. This splinter cell seeks to appoint a new grand patriarch of the faith and reform the way in which knowledge is distributed.

Streetwise DC 10: King Foril vigorously puts down all attempts to form thieves' guilds and smuggling groups in Suzail. The streets are heavily patrolled by Purple Dragons, making the city one of the safest in the Heartlands. A curfew keeps the streets clear late at night.

Streetwise DC 15: The War Wizards use magic to spy on anyone of questionable character in the city. They used to mind-ream suspects but stopped that practice after the Spellplague caused gruesome results.

Streetwise DC 20: A criminal underworld does exist in Suzail. It is well hidden behind the doors of private clubs and in upstairs rooms of inns and festhalls. Due to the vigilance of the Purple Dragons, anyone looking for criminal contacts must be very careful..

NOBILITY

The noble families of Cormyr are a large, influential, and constant presence in Suzail. Their wealth, fashions, intrigues, and entertainments set the tone of the city. At least one member of each noble family maintains a residence in Suzail. This custom dates back to an age-old practice by the monarchy of taking political hostages to keep the nobility in line, but today, the noble presence in Suzail is based on tradition and cultural pressure rather than edict.

About two dozen major noble families are represented in Suzail, along with a fluctuating number of minor houses. Many houses were severely hurt during the Spellplague and the subsequent chaos and conflict with Netheril; others were wiped out entirely. In the Year of the Dark Daughter (1480 DR), the four great houses prominent in Suzail are Crownsilver, Illance, Rowanmantle, and Truesilver. The second tier of noble houses in the city consists of Alsevir, Cormaeril, Dauntinghorn, Dracohorn, Emmarask, Greatgaunt, Goldfeather, Hawklin, Huntcrown, Marliir, and Wintersun.

Alsevir: This old-blood house was ennobled centuries ago in the Goblin Wars (circa 200 DR). It was thought to have died out, but distant relatives of the family rejoined Cormyrean society around the Year of the Dark Goddess (1420 DR). They have assumed ownership of the Bleth estate, which had been empty since that family's exile in the Year of the Striking Falcon (1359 DR). House Bleth had ties to the Fire Knives, an assassin organization that swore eternal vengeance on House Obarskyr. The Alsevirs are still finding hidden passages and rooms laced with traps, requiring the family to hire experts to clear out their own mansion.

Before returning to nobility, the Alsevirs were merchants and travelers, building up many contacts and trade routes through the Heartlands and the Sword Coast. They have used their fiscal acumen to buy their way up the social ladder in Suzail, but their

rapid ascent has ruffled feathers among the other houses. The Crownsilvers, in particular, find the Alsevirs' blatant purchasing of social standing to be crass and unfitting for nobility.

Cormaeril: This family was once the largest landowner in Cormyr after the Crown. However, when the Fire Knives were driven from the kingdom in the Year of the Gate (1341 DR), the War Wizards discovered that several Cormaerils were part of that treasonous organization. The family fortunes took another blow when a few members were implicated in the Abraxus Affair of 1369 DR (in which a magical, bull-like creature tried to assassinate King Azoun IV). The king exiled the entire family and seized all its lands.

Azoun V restored the Cormaerils to nobility late in his reign, but he did not restore their lands, which have remained with the Crown. Fortunately for the Cormaerils, they are a widespread family with influences in many lands outside Cormyr, including Daggerdale. They are determined to rebuild their influence and reputation in Suzail through loyal service to King Foril, shows of generosity to the commoners, and patronage of the arts. The younger Cormaeril scions have a friendly competition with the younger Hawklins for capturing bounties and claiming rewards. The Cormaerils have a longtime rivalry with the Huntcrowns, who whisper insinuations against the former landowners. To counteract these rumors, the Cormaerils are trying to build relations with the Crownsilvers.

Crownsilver: One of the two remaining royal houses, the Crownsilver family is growing tired of the games of the Royal Court and the positioning that plays out as Foril's reign draws to a close. The Crownsilvers are not completely reliant on the king's patronage; their vast fortune is more than enough to support them in regal style. They dislike how blatantly dependent on trade some of the younger houses have become, feeling that this trend makes Cormyr more like Sembia. The family finds the Alsevirs, Goldfeathers, and Marliirs particularly egregious in this regard. The Crownsilvers sponsor events throughout the year that emphasize chivalry and honor, such as tournaments and hunts.

Dauntinghorn: The Dauntinghorns' wealth is based on shipping, and they are keen to expand Cormyr's nautical power. The shifting of the Imperial Navy from Marsember to Suzail has increased the family's influence and reputation in the city. The Dauntinghorns are strong allies with the Truesilvers and support that house's efforts to have a greater presence on the Lake of Dragons. The Dauntinghorns zealously pursue pirates, and unlike the Blue Dragons, they seek to eliminate piracy throughout the Sea of Fallen Stars. The family regularly posts bounties for the capture of pirate ships. Many times these vessels are found to be based out of Westgate, a fact that has aggravated tensions between Cormyr and that port city. These strained relations do not concern the Dauntinghorns, who consider Westgate a nest of vermin.

Dracohorn: This small house has a terrible reputation among the other nobles in Suzail. The Crown ennobled its founder for slaying a blue dragon near Suzail, but detractors whisper that the dragon was already dead and the founder's deed was fraudulent. During the Abraxus Affair, the Dracohorns publicly suggested transferring power from the monarchy to a council of nobles. The family narrowly avoided exile but was harshly reprimanded by the Crown. Although they have not repeated this proposal since, the Dracohorns still desire to shift power away from the monarchy. The family has been making strong alliances with House Illance and House Wintersun, and it sees opportunity in the upcoming royal succession.

Emmarask: This family is composed of career politicians and governors who have a long tradition of quiet service without abuse of power. The king draws many local lords and their heralds from its ranks, giving the family tremendous influence throughout Cormyr. Wise nobles respect the Emmarasks for their service even if they consider the family conservative and staid. Foolish nobles find that the family's subtle influence can devastate a promising career. House Emmarask has conflicting opinions on the rapid rise of Eleanor Thond to the position of herald of Suzail. Some members find her an upstart commoner who is usurping their traditional role in the kingdom and want her removed. Others point out her effectiveness and suggest marrying her into the family.

Greatgaunt: Ennobled two centuries back for outstanding military service, the Greatgaunts began as horse breeders and parlayed their earnings into modest but ever more valuable properties in central Suzail and western Marsember. The Greatgaunts maintain a low profile as dignified supporters of the royal family. Sticklers for tradition and etiquette, they are almost always voices of moderation in noble gatherings. Family members are shrewd but patient investors, and they are also philanthropists who make friends high and low in social standing. Like the Crownsilvers, they find the grasping of the Alsevirs, the Goldfeathers, and the Marliirs unseemly. Recently, a recurring plague of strangles struck the family's herds, damaging the season's crop of foals and sullying the Greatgaunts' reputation in the city. Some family members suspect foul play and believe that their horses are being purposely infected with the highly contagious disease.

Goldfeather: The Goldfeathers have a long, scandal-ridden history. Twice stripped of their noble title, they most recently regained it under Azoun V in the Year of Darkenbeasts Risen (1442 DR). Six years later, the family's fortunes took a strong turn for the better when Prince Irvel, Azoun's grandson, married Ospra, the daughter of the current Lord Goldfeather. The marriage caused quite a furor among the other nobles, especially the Crownsilvers, who did everything in their power to prevent the union. The Goldfeathers have not forgiven the Crownsilvers for this slight and look for any opportunity to embarrass

that royal house. Despite their vacillating wealth and the opposition of many other noble houses, the Goldfeathers are, for once, steadfastly loyal to the Crown. Perhaps aware of the tenuous position her family holds in the city, Ospra refuses to advocate for her father, which greatly limits the family's influence on the Crown's decisions.

Hawklin: Before being ennobled two centuries ago, the Hawklins supported Cormyr for generations beforehand through service in the Purple Dragons. They continue their military service and are one of the few families that tolerates its younger members becoming adventurers. It is not unheard of for a scion of House Hawklin to visit taverns in Suzail, seeking chartered adventuring parties for a dangerous quest. The house compensates for its lack of lands and businesses by surviving off rewards and looting from successful adventures. The Hawklins believe that war with Netheril is inevitable, and they advocate for a strong stance against Sembia, a dramatic increase in military spending, and training by the War Wizards to counter the power of the Shades.

Huntcrown: The Huntcrowns are a diverse family with interests all over Cormyr. They are active participants in the functions and intrigues of the Royal Court, where they are known gossips and have a reputation for the most scandals of any noble family. The Cormaerils were their historical rivals, but since that family's exile, the Huntcrowns' competitive ire is split between Emmarask, Illance, and Marliir. The resulting lack of focus has weakened the family's effectiveness in the Royal Court, especially with respect to the Emmarasks and the Illances, but the Huntcrowns have had great success in humbling the Marliirs—so much so that the present rumor-mongering campaign is in danger of becoming an open feud. The Huntcrowns have taken the precaution of hiring bodyguards for protection when they leave their estate.

Illance: The Illance family's star is rising again after generations of the house's slowly losing influence because of poor management of its fortunes. Its financial woes were solved through a series of clever deals with the Seven Suns Trading Company and by taking advantage of reopened trade with Sembia. This reversal of fortune has caused some to question the family's loyalty to Cormyr, but most blame the insinuations on the wagging tongues of Huntcrown and put little stock in the tales. Notorious womanizers, the Illances are frequent patrons of mask-dancer clubs. The family is vocal in its opposition to the Suzail Writ and finds a friendly ear in House Dracohorn. It remains to be seen if Illance will join with Dracohorn's plan to create a ruling council of nobles.

Marliir: Traditionally, the Marliirs had their power base in and around Arabel and were outsiders at the Royal Court. That situation changed when Azoun V married Nalara Marliir in the Year of the Secret (1396 DR), which elevated the family's status and influence in the court. Its fortunes have waned in the century since this coup, especially under the relentless social assault of the Huntcrowns and the disdain of the Greatgaunts and the Crownsilvers. The animosity between the Marliirs and the Huntcrowns is particularly virulent and threatens to erupt into an open feud. Already, fisticuffs between their younger scions are becoming common, and courtiers have observed more than a dozen duels in the Royal Gardens.

Rowanmantle: The Rowanmantles are a small family with ancestral possessions near Tilverton. Their status has steadily climbed in the last century because they expanded to rule most of the lands near the Tilverton Scar and married into the "nobility" of Shadowdale. The family steadfastly supports the Obarskyrs and became advisors to the Crown during the rule of the Steel Regent and Azoun V. The Rowanmantles' connections with the Dalelands were instrumental in creating the alliance between Cormyr, the Dalelands, and Cormanthor against Sembia. This alliance forced Sembia to come to terms, which greatly enhanced the Rowanmantles' reputation in Cormyr as one of the top noble families. The family continues to maintain close ties with the Dalelands and Cormanthor, supporting those lands against the many threats that surround them.

The Rowanmantles are strong allies of the Hawklin family, sharing concerns about the intent of Netheril and opposing the efforts of House Truesilver and House Dauntinghorn to focus the kingdom's might southward, across the Dragonmere. The Rowanmantles watch House Cormaeril's ascension of power in Daggerdale carefully. By taking an active role in the dales, the Cormaerils are treading on the Rowanmantles' self-proclaimed sphere of influence. However, House Rowanmantle could use more allies in the court, and if Cormaeril is sincere about helping the dales, the two houses would have a common cause.

Truesilver: This house has a long military tradition, and its nobles have commanded the Purple Dragons several times. It has maintained its status by having skilled and well-placed members of the family in the military, particularly the burgeoning navy. The Truesilvers have formed a strong alliance with the Dauntinghorns, who share their focus on the Dragonmere and the Inner Sea. This relationship puts them in opposition to the Rowanmantles and the Hawklins in court. The Truesilvers are too gracious to consider another family as an enemy, but they strongly disagree with the Rowanmantles on the priorities of the nation. The weight of the royal house has carried the day so far, and the kingdom places increasing emphasis on expanding its naval power and stretching its influence on the Dragonmere. The Truesilvers share the concerns of the Crownsilvers over the perceived obsession with trade shown by some of the lesser noble houses. Although they are not as shrill about it as the other house, the Truesilvers participate in the chivalric events sponsored by the Crownsilvers.

Wintersun: The Wintersuns are upcountry nobles who until recently had almost no presence in Suzail. They own extensive country estates and have made a great deal of money leasing fields, hiring tenant farmers, and selling off the surplus crops.

During the Abraxus Affair, they learned that nobles without holdings in Suzail are considered backwater hicks, so they started investing heavily in the capital. The family has quietly and steadily bought properties in Suzail and is now the largest landlord in the city. Over the years, many accusations have dogged the Wintersuns, claiming that they engage in high-pressure techniques and intimidation to get owners to sell. The gossips of House Huntcrown say that House Wintersun acts as much like a criminal organization as one can without engaging in anything criminal. The family has found common cause with the Dracohorns and the Illances. House Wintersun also detests the Suzail Writ as an affront to the privileges of nobility. However, the Wintersuns do not want to risk their property in the city becoming subject to royal seizure and have refused to support the Dracohorns' treasonous idea for a council of nobles.

RUMORS ABOUT TOWN

Rumors abound in the noble-laden halls of the Royal Court and the streets of Suzail. Below are some of the latest stories to circulate through the city.

Sembia is about to invade. That country is already buying up Suzail building by building and trading company by trading company. They will make their move any day now, probably working through swindlers in Westgate.

The priests of Oghma have become very secretive since the Church in Exile took over the Silent Room. Perhaps they have knowledge that was thought to have drowned with Lantan and want to keep it for themselves.

King Foril plans to make commoners the equals of nobles. He pursues this goal slowly and by trickery to avoid civil war, but he is going to do it—that is, if the nobles don't have him assassinated first. And they're trying, twice or thrice every tenday.

One of the younger Truesilvers has run away, and no one knows why. It was probably to avoid being enlisted in the military, but some say it was to elope with a commoner. A commoner! Can you imagine it?

An argument erupted last night between a Marliir and a Huntcrown at the Witch-Duke's Bride. Blows were avoided at the tavern, but a challenge of a duel has been made and accepted. They're sorting out where and when it will take place. There could be noble blood spilled soon.

Exiled House Bleth has found a bastard descendant of Azoun IV. It is supporting the scion's claim to the throne of Cormyr in return for being restored to nobility. When the Bleths are back in power, they will take their revenge on all who wronged them.

A Sembian merchant was caught importing fake saffron from Turmish. The merchant has been chained to a stone chair and doused with water stained by his fake goods. Sembia will respond; it's just a question of when and how.

The Wintersuns have their fingers in everything. They even own the deed to the Cormaerils' manor in the city. They hold it over the family's head and make them support the Wintersun agenda in the Royal Court.

The Rowanmantles are pushing King Foril to establish a permanent embassy with Cormanthyr in Myth Drannor. Although this seems to be in Cormyr's interest, how will Sembia respond? More important, how will Netheril respond?

TRADE

As one of the two major ports in the nation, a wide variety of goods enters and passes through Suzail. The city exports copper bars from Espar, grain from all over Cormyr, and bone carvings from the uplands. Suzail imports wine from the Sword Coast, spices and silks from the east, and citrus from the southern Inner Sea. Artisans in the city craft musical instruments, cloth, finished garments, sword blades, and armor. Suzail is especially known for its durable, everyday woolens that are often trimmed with leather. Most of the sail making and shipbuilding had moved to Marsember as land became more valuable in Suzail, but with the return of the Imperial Navy, these industries are increasing once again.

The guilds of Suzail pride themselves on their quality and take substandard goods very seriously. They often hire third-party inspectors to peruse the markets and shops to ensure quality. Miscreant shopkeepers are chained to a stone chair in the Market Hall for a day with defective wares hung around their necks or burned at their feet. Bad produce, wine, ale, or scent is poured or smeared over them. Visiting merchants are punished the same way, after which their goods are confiscated and they are exiled from the city for a season.

Small artisans provide the bulk of the manufacturing in Suzail, and merchant houses and trading families dominate shipping and caravan transport. The most powerful merchant houses include the Seven Suns Trading Coster, the Trueshield Trading Priakos, and the trading families of Glanend and Skatterhawk. The Seven Suns' caravans have the leanest guards and the worst wagons, but the coster undercuts its competitors on most routes. It continually offers employment for guards, because the coster's low pay ensures a constant turnover. More than one adventuring party has gotten its start by escorting the coster's rickety wagons. In contrast, the Trueshield Trading Priakos builds its own wagons

and equips and trains its own guards. Few bandits tangle with its caravans, and even orcs leave them alone on most trips. Trueshield's rates are expensive, but the company almost always delivers.

The Glanend family focuses on land trade inside Cormyr, such as bringing grain to the markets in Suzail. The Purple Dragons suspect some of the Glanend agents of smuggling goods in the sacks of grain that rumble through the gates daily. The wealth of the Skatterhawk family centers on shipping, and it owns many ships large and small. Its greatest concern is the pirates who operate out of Westgate across the Dragonmere and who seem to have a disturbing knack for finding vulnerable Skatterhawk ships. The family suspects that the pirates use magical divinations or receive information from a spy.

Religion

Suzail boasts major temples to Tymora and Oghma and lesser shrines to Lliira, Malar, Tempus, and Milil. The most prominent temple in Suzail is the Towers of Good Fortune, dedicated to Tymora. During the Time of Troubles, Tymora herself appeared in Arabel, prompting a resurgence of her faith throughout Cormyr that continues to this day. Although the goddess stayed at her temple in Arabel, the temple in Suzail is larger and more impressive. An elaborate wishing well has recently been constructed in its sanctuary. The well is more of a fountain—water cascades down a series of steps beneath a statue of Tymora as she appeared in Arabel many years ago. Those who cast a gold piece into the well while saying a prayer to the goddess are said to gain her blessing on their next venture.

Luckmaster Olane Davanac oversees the temple and is assisted by more than a dozen priests (called Luckbringers) and several hundred lay worshipers. Davanac is an older human woman who began her service to Lady Luck in Arabel. She traveled widely in her youth, serving in multiple temples throughout the Heartlands. Rumors persist that on her travels she met and fell in love with a talented minstrel from Berdusk. At this point, the accounts diverge. Some claim that the minstrel broke her heart, while others say that he was slain by a jealous rival. Davanac does not speak of her past, but she has never married.

Nobles and merchants constantly seek the blessing of Tymora, and no significant venture is undertaken in the city without the prayers of the Luckbringers. Although the priests do not charge directly for their attentions, most people provide offerings in the hopes that it will tip the odds in their favor; thus, the temple is extremely wealthy. Luckmaster Davanac is willing to cast rituals for adventurers in return for donations to the temple.

The second major temple in Suzail is the Silent Room, once dedicated to Denier but now sanctified to Oghma. When Oghma's Chosen, Grand Patriarch Cullen Kordamant, disappeared more than 120 years ago, his faith split into two major factions. The Orthodox Church of Oghma based in Procampur refused to appoint a new grand patriarch until Cullen was proven to be dead or until Oghma named a replacement. The Oghmanyte Church in Sembia did appoint a new grand patriarch, which the Orthodox Church refused to accept. The Sembian faction also disagreed with the Orthodox Church on the dissemination of knowledge, teaching that knowledge must be tested and proven worthy before being released to the public. The Oghmanyte Church recently relocated from Sembia to the Silent Room in Suzail.

High Namer Wyndel Sedranis leads the Silent Room, holding sway over a half-dozen other priests and nearly one hundred lay followers. Sedranis is related to the Emmarask family, which supported his accession to the head of the temple. His primary focus is the schism with the Orthodox Church. He constantly writes to the other temples to convince them of the need to recognize a new grand patriarch. If his messages are not persuasive, Sedranis plans to seek diplomatic emissaries to represent the Oghmanyte Church to the other temples in an attempt to heal the schism.

The Silent Room houses a large library of histories and fiction of the Dragonreach lands. For a small fee per volume, anyone can peruse the books. The church maintains auditoriums to discuss and test theories before releasing them to the public. The priests take significant steps to ensure privacy of the discussions to keep dangerous and untested knowledge from spreading.

Culture

Suzail functions as two cities. The Royal Palace, the Royal Court, and the noble estates surrounding them form a sphere of wealth and power that is not accessible to the common Suzailian. The rest of the city is given over to crafts and trade, which are beneath the notice of most nobles. However, these two cities rely upon each other heavily. The commoners provide goods and services needed by the nobles. In turn, the commoners derive their livings from the nobles and emulate the nobility in their entertainments.

Fairs and Festivals

The city celebrates the usual festivals of Midwinter, Greengrass, Midsummer, Highharvestide, and the Feast of the Moon. Suzail adds three festivals of its own devising—the hiring fairs, the Festival of the Sword, and Chasing the King. With the exception of the hiring fairs, most shops close down for all these celebrations, and many noble families host grand soirees. Many shops are closed the day after a festival to recover.

Hiring Fairs: Workers skilled in a trade gather at hiring fairs held in the spring, summer, and fall so that prospective employers can select new employees. The choices offered by a large selection of skilled craftfolk please the employers, and the public nature of the fairs prevents unscrupulous merchants from hiring desperate workers at exploitative wages to undersell

their rivals. Lately, chartered adventuring parties have used hiring fairs as a way to find patrons. It might not be glamorous, but the adventurers say it is more likely to produce work than waiting in a tavern.

Festival of the Sword: Held on the fourth day of Kythorn, this festival represents the importance of the arms trade to Suzail. The celebration consists of a mounted parade of armorsmiths dressed in the best armor their shops make. They gallop through the streets, waving blades, bellowing war cries, and sounding horns. When the bells toll at the Citadel of the Purple Dragons, the riders race to the gates of the Royal Court, where an assembly of nobles and courtiers toasts them with fine drink. Afterward, the crowd watches champions fight monsters in a prepared ring on the court's grounds. Long ago, the combats were playacting, but for the last hundred years, the monsters have been real and the battles in earnest. Adventurers vie for the opportunity to fill the role of champion, which carries a fat purse. The Lord Magister also hires adventurers to capture monsters for use in the festival.

Chasing the King: The other uniquely Suzailian holiday is Chasing the King. This macabre festival is celebrated on the sixth day of Marpenoth in dubious honor of Boldovar Obarskyr. Mad Boldovar would fly into berserk killing rages and set off across the city, hacking and slashing at everything and everyone in his way. For this festival, a criminal condemned to death volunteers to play the role of the king. He is given armor and a blunt sword and allowed to roam the streets till sundown. Anyone can attack the "king," but he is allowed to defend himself. If the king can stay alive till dusk, he wins his freedom.

Fashion

As the home of the Royal Court, Suzail sets fashion trends for the rest of Cormyr. Nobles and wealthy noble aspirants follow new fashions eagerly, and the city's designers are only too happy to provide. Suzail is a busy trading port, and visitors from across the world add variety to the trends. Adventurers seeking noble patrons are advised to keep up with the fashions in the city to make the right impression.

The current trend for men is loose white cotton shirts with belled sleeves and a laced collar and cuffs matched with knee-length breeches and bucket-top boots. For formal occasions, men wear patterned doublets over their shirts. Short cloaks, usually hip-length and often with sleeves, are slung over the shoulder. The lining of the cloak matches the doublet. Two belts are worn—one to hold up the breeches and a second for pouches. Baldrics have replaced sword belts in recent years, but older fashions hung the scabbard from the second belt. The hat of choice is a Capitano with a wide brim and a crown that is low rounded or flat. The hat is often decorated with exotic feathers, and one of the brims can be pinned up if desired.

Women's fashions are a smock or a bodice worn over a white cotton chemise, which might have long sleeves, short sleeves, or no sleeves. The bodice is matched with a skirt that is split to reveal the petticoat underneath, which is patterned to match the bodice. When dressing formally, women wear gowns with low, rounded necklines and vests over the top for warmth. Women's headgear varies widely, ranging from a simple linen coif to a feminine version of the Capitano.

Shopkeepers of both genders add various styles of aprons or coveralls over their other clothing and whatever headgear they prefer (or their guild and profession customarily uses). Scholars, mages, and scribes wear robes with breeches and an overcloak.

Ornamental canes are a trend of the past two seasons. Favored by younger nobles and noble sons (who have no use for a real cane), they are the latest example of conspicuous consumption. The canes are slim rods of fine, polished wood, shod at both ends with ornately crafted precious metals. The handle caps are ringed with the owner's crown of rank, and the end has the armorial bearing, in relief, of the owner's family.

Nightlife

Full of nobles, wealthy merchants, and foreign dignitaries, Suzail has a thriving night life. There is no lack of entertainment or dining experiences in the city that has been called the brightest jewel in Cormyr's crown.

Suzail is a city of clubs, and almost everyone of importance belongs to at least one. Entrance to the clubs is restricted to members, who are commonly allowed to bring in one guest each. The tradition of clubs began several hundred years ago as exclusive gathering places for nobles who wanted to drink, gamble, and be entertained without wading through a sea of commoners. After a few prominent nobles joined the nascent clubs, everyone wanted to be part of one. Most clubs are drinking establishments, but many specialize in gambling or in providing services to adventurers. The most recent trend in club entertainment is the mask-dancer clubs, which feature beautiful dancers who wear masks of fearsome creatures and little else.

Eating out is a citywide tradition, and Suzail has many restaurants to accommodate the demand. A great deal of business in the city is settled during the course of a meal. Refined patrons who wish to discuss employment with chartered adventurers usually do so over dinner. Restaurants range from shuttered dockside windows to haughty establishments that cater to the wealthiest nobles, and many of them come and go with the seasons. They typically shut down in the winter and reappear in the warm months under new names and in new places to take advantage of the tax breaks the lord chamberlain gives to all new businesses.

The city is well furnished with watering holes, since most Suzailians prefer a quick drink after work before stumbling home to bed. Taverns tend to be small, quiet establishments that cater to locals, but several notable exceptions exist. Every tavern in the town has a "snoring room" where customers can

sleep off their drinks. In compensation for the room's use, the tavernmaster is entitled to take the cost of one drink of the most expensive sort that the sleeper drank that evening.

Suzail has many inns to accommodate visiting travelers. Innkeepers are notoriously discriminatory about the sort of lodgers they take, and adventurers are steered to the handful of inns that cater to their needs. (The inns described in "Important Sites" below accept adventurers.) Most inns rent rooms by the month over the winter when traffic is slowest.

Important Sites

Suzail is built on a deepwater harbor on the north shore of the Dragonmere. The city barely felt the physical effects of the Spellplague. The deep harbor meant that the lowering of the water level in the Lake of Dragons had a minimal effect on the city.

Unlike many larger cities, Suzail does not have sewers because the tides of the Lake of Dragons backwashed the waste into the city, causing significant sanitation problems. The sewers that had been dug were filled in. Instead, dung wagons patrol the streets and cart unwanted waste to the midden fields outside the city walls.

Locations likely to be of importance to adventurers are described below.

Bindle's: This club was once the place to be seen among the nobility but has since lost its allure. It is now a drinking club for merchants to discuss business, and many deals are sealed in the wood-paneled rooms. Visitors should be aware that intrigue among the merchants can be just as vicious as that among the nobility.

Dragon's Jaws: This inn faces onto the Promenade and is renowned for a number of exciting and dangerous encounters in its taproom, including the death of a mind flayer and the revelation of a gold dragon. A gnome called Gnorm owned the inn, but he passed away several years ago. He left the inn to a distant cousin who lives near Scornubel, but the cousin has not arrived to take possession. The dwarf bartender Milo Dudley continues to run the day-to-day operation of the Dragon's Jaws, as he always has, even though he is getting on in years. Milo is concerned that something might have happened to Gnorm's cousin and would be pleased if anyone passing through Scornubel would check on him.

Dragonriders' Club: This private club is the favorite nighttime destination of many nobles and wealthy merchants. Its primary attraction is its beautiful mask-dancers. Nobles often invite people they are attempting to impress to the club for a dance by their favorite performer. The club's owner, a woman named Tress, is very protective of her dancers, even in the face of drunken nobles. During the daytime hours, the club offers meals and services such as haircuts and baths to its members. It was recently damaged in a brawl between nobles, but it has since been repaired and is open for business.

Golden Goblin: Angry men come to this tavern looking for fights—and often find them. The regulars like picking fights with newcomers, so those who wish to avoid a barroom brawl should drink elsewhere. The tavern is a smoky place with a low ceiling and oft-mended furniture. A huge statue of a goblin leers from a perch. It glows with a golden hue and lights the tavern.

The Jaws: This culvert siphons the stream from Lake Azoun under the streets of Suzail to the Basin. Since it allows travel through the city unseen, it is attractive to those who are up to no good. The Purple Dragons are aware of the culvert and have it under strict surveillance.

Laughing Lass: The Laughing Lass is a tavern that transforms into a festhall on warm summer evenings. Adventurers gather here, where Purple Dragons and War Wizards are not welcome, to drink and make deals. Lassendri owns the tavern and knows much about the Suzailian underworld. The best way to fence stolen goods, make contacts with outlaws, or arrange shady deals is with the help of one of the lovely professional escorts in a room upstairs.

Leaning Post: This quiet inn owned by the Hawklin family reflects its desire for no-nonsense quality. It uses the inn to house retainers it does not want to keep in its mansion or for meetings away from the eyes of other nobles. A few of the other families, including the Huntcrowns, are aware of these meetings and spy on the inn to see what the Hawklins are up to.

The Lockup: An imposing and dour building that resembles a giant square of stone, the Lockup is the prison of Suzail. Suspects awaiting trial are kept here, as are criminals serving their time. Rumor has it that the statues of Purple Dragons built into the edifice animate at the warden's command to put down riots.

The Myrmidon: Once called Thelmar's Inn, this place changed names when new owners took over and rebuilt the entire structure. The proprietors are a pair of brothers who served in the Purple Dragons. They rescued a member of the Cormaeril family from a gang of dark ones from the Shadowfell. The reward from the grateful Cormaerils was enough to let the brothers purchase the inn. Dark ones are notoriously vengeful, and the brothers encourage adventurers to stay at the inn to discourage retribution.

Nightgate Inn: The Nightgate Inn is the only inn outside the walls of the city. It looks like a fort and has stone walls as thick as those of the Citadel of the Purple Dragons. The inn is damp and gloomy year-round and the prices are outlandish, but visitors do not have to contend with the city gate, so it has a constant supply of guests. The Nightgate Inn also provides an excellent venue for clandestine meetings with those who are barred from entering Suzail.

The Osculatory: "The Osco" is a private club that caters to young nobles and citizens of quality who wish to meet others of similar social status for romantic encounters. Sometimes called a kissing club, the Osco gets pretty wild late at night, and being seen leaving the club in the morning can damage a

member's reputation or make it, depending upon the kind of reputation sought.

Promenade: The most popular location in Suzail is the Promenade, a long, semicircular street that divides the royal area from the rest of the city. The Promenade is illuminated with magical flames of bright amber tones, making it safe and well lit at night. These radiances also light major cross streets throughout the city at each intersection.

Ring of Coins: This pawn shop is renowned throughout the city for its wide variety of wares. The selection ranges from outdated furniture to wild costumes and outrageous accessories. The Ring of Coins deals with dubious items as well, such as thieves' tools, and some of the items might be stolen. The shop purchases intriguing items from adventurers that they cannot sell elsewhere.

Royal Court: The Royal Court is a sprawling labyrinth of interconnected buildings, erected and expanded over the centuries. The court stretches almost a quarter mile along the Promenade. Its several hundred chambers house the legal and administrative bureaucracy of Cormyr, including the Lord Magister and his herald. The nobles of the country gather here to meet, discuss, and plot.

Royal Palace: The Palace of the Purple Dragon rises out of the wooded Royal Gardens like a fairy-tale castle, all slender spires, balconies, and pennants. The palace is the private residence of the royal family. The royal houses of Crownsilver and Truesilver have apartments here, but their family members usually stay at their individual estates. Most matters of government are handled at the Royal Court, and an invitation inside the walls of the Royal Palace is extraordinarily rare.

Six Candles: "The Sixer" is an old inn that has a reputation as a den of smugglers and other nefarious patrons. The inn has a crowd of suspicious-looking regulars who always seem to be present, nursing their drinks and having mumbled conversations. The Sixer also has extensive cellars, making it easy to hide goods or conduct secret meetings. Some say that the cellars open into the abandoned sewers of Suzail, which were not quite as filled in as the Purple Dragons think.

Society of Stalwart Adventurers: This exclusive club is housed in an old, luxurious mansion boasting many fireplaces and the stuffed heads of monsters. Older members meet here to talk about their adventures and reminisce about expeditions. The club has an extensive library of old adventurers' journals, which detail lairs, ruins, and dungeons scattered across Cormyr and beyond. The staff includes several shifters, who are given to pranks such as displaying fangs, claws, or horns.

Tavernant's Tellings: This shop was the original innovator that began offering printing services to the general public. Tavernant's prints advertising broadsheets, notices, and menus and is the best way to spread information to a lot of people very quickly. Posters sometimes glue broadsheets to stone walls around town, forcing property owners to burn the sheets off. This situation gave rise to the Suzailian expression "the latest scorched," which refers to recent news.

Wailing Wheel: This is the quietest of Suzail's large inns. The prices are low, but the inn is cold and dirty, the dining room fare is meager, and the service is nonexistent. Rumors say the Wailing

QUESTS IN SUZAIL

With all the nobles and other powerful individuals in Suzail, adventuring parties have a virtually limitless number of potential patrons. Suzail is highly politicized, and choosing one patron could alienate others. Below are four patrons who make excellent sources for adventures.

Lady Eleanor Thond is a valuable resource for a chartered adventuring party in Suzail. She is well connected politically and has access to information and people unavailable to most characters. Although she is part of the establishment, she is willing to bend the rules and hire adventurers to take care of matters quietly, outside of official channels. Thond's concerns are mostly inside the city, so her missions and adventures would take place in Suzail.

Gyles Hawklin, the senior member of House Hawklin in Suzail, is extremely concerned about Netheril's plan for Cormyr. He seeks adventurers to scout the activities of the Shades of Netheril and report on their plots. Hawklin missions would send the characters into Sembia, the Dalelands, the Moonsea, and Netheril.

High Namer Wyndel Sedranis of the Silent Room is facing polite resistance from some of his noble sponsors in Suzail who want the internal conflict in the Church of Oghma ended as quickly as possible. The easiest way to heal the rift is to prove that Grand Patriarch Cullen is dead. Sedranis seeks adventurers to follow leads and discover the final fate of the grand patriarch.

House Dauntinghorn regularly posts bounties for pirates who plague shipping on the Lake of Dragons. Interested adventurers are directed to Lavertes Dauntinghorn, who pays the bounties. Lavertes knows a great deal about activities on the high seas and is a source of many nautical adventures..

Wheel stays in business only because it is owned by Sembian agents.

Witch-Duke's Bride: A relatively new tavern, the Witch-Duke's Bride is the current favorite among Suzail's high society. The owner, Mastaal Gerahgen, is a retired ship captain, and he stocks the largest variety of liquor in the city, using his many contacts around the Sea of Fallen Stars. Many younger nobles come to taste exotic liquors and hear tales from travelers from across the sea. A perceptive patron can learn much about the shipping in and out of Suzail by listening to the nobles talk after a few potent drinks.

Adventure Hooks

Service to the Crown, the schemes of the nobles, and travelers from many foreign lands make the city a location brimming with adventure possibilities. Below are several ideas for adventures set in Suzail.

A Dread Pirate in Need: During the Chasing the King festival, the prisoner "king" runs down the street, through the inn, or wherever the characters are staying. She spies them and begs them to help her escape from Suzail. If they agree, she promises to split a sizable hidden treasure that will make them very rich. If the characters don't help her, a horde of bloodthirsty citizens chases her off. If they do help, the prisoner is true to her word and leads them to the buried treasure once they are away from Suzail. The treasure is something she hid before her arrest. She was captured and condemned to death for piracy, but she is not just any pirate—she is the notorious Kharee Beltran, captain of the *Revelation Mead*. Now free, she intends to resume her old ways, but she needs a crew of formidable adventurers to help her.

A Masked Dance: A mask-dancer club hires the party for extra protection. A minor noble of House Illance has taken a fancy to one of the girls and is practically stalking her. While the party guards the club, the dancer, Dedania, becomes very friendly with one of the characters. Does she honestly like the character, or is she just using the adventurer for protection? If her advances are reciprocated, she asks the character to deliver a letter to her brother in Daerlun. Meanwhile, the Illance noble approaches the party and informs them that the dancer is actually a spy for Sembia. He wants to hire the party to find out what Dedania has learned about his family's business and to whom she is reporting. Is the Illance noble telling the truth, or is he using the adventurers to learn more about the dancer? The letter to Dedania's brother seems innocuous enough, but is it in code? And what awaits the party in Daerlun—the dancer's brother or a Sembian spy ring?

Staying out of Print: Penelope Nilain is a courtesan renowned throughout the city for her wit, beauty, and physical talent. She has escorted many nobles over the years, and her companionship is always in demand. Nilain recently decided to retire from the business. To support herself in retirement, she is writing her autobiography, which is sure to contain salacious details on a large number of nobles. She is offering her former clients the opportunity to buy their way out of being mentioned in her book. She hires the party to protect her from any accidents that might befall her during the writing process. On the other hand, parts of her autobiography must be juicy indeed if nobles are willing to spend significant gold to prevent themselves from being included. Those pages would be extremely valuable in the right hands. Anyone who steals her manuscript can name his own price—or he might become the new target.

Travails of a Messenger: The Rowanmantles are vigorously reinforcing the alliance between Cormyr and the Dalelands. The family hires the party to escort a messenger traveling overland from Suzail to Ashabenford. Before the characters leave Suzail, they must contend with agents from the Huntcrowns, who use tricks and intrigue to learn about their mission, and the Truesilvers, who evoke patriotism and loyalty to the Crown. In addition to the usual bandits and monsters that harry the roads, at some point during the trip, agents of Sembia or Netheril try to kidnap the messenger to extract information. Are the characters just unlucky, or did the Rowanmantles use them as a decoy for the real messenger? If the party's messenger is the real one, what information is being carried to the Dalelands? What if the "message" is actually the party, because the Rowanmantles have promised to send adventurers to help the beleaguered dales?

About the Author

Eric Menge is an author, editor, and intermittent attorney. He has designed nearly twenty adventures for the RPGA, written website articles for Wizards of the Coast, and acted as a campaign administrator for the *Living Greyhawk* campaign. He is currently creating an online graphic novel, *Snow by Night*, and dreams of muskets, alchemy, and snow in the moonlight. Eric would like to thank Brian Cortijo, Brian R. James, and Ed Greenwood for their invaluable assistance during the writing of this article.

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Monster Manual Update: Nightmare

By Logan Bonner

Illustration by Stephen Crowe

Blazing steeds charge through the darkest night to haunt dreams and serve the cause of evil.

"Visions had haunted me night after night: a jet-black horse with a mane of fire trampling me, its hooves scalding my flesh. One evening these apparitions finally abated. I felt safe once again and proceeded with my journey to Histaven.

"Then I saw the beast in the flesh! Even now it pursues me. I dearly hope these will not be the last words I write."

—Unsigned note

Nightmares might look like horses, but their malign intelligence and cruel hearts make them capable of evil no mere beasts would dare. Their flaming manes, tails, nostrils, and hooves make their gaunt black bodies seem to disappear into the blackness of night, giving them a hellish appearance. Common rumor claims that nightmares run so swiftly they can't be seen. Those who have observed the creatures (and lived to tell of it) speculate that the beasts actually walk through shadows, or perhaps gallop through a space between spaces.

Certainly the beasts move differently from true horses. Its gait looks much the same, but a nightmare can go from a stop to a gallop in the blink of an eye, or appear out of nowhere though standing perfectly still. Scouts who follow the smoldering hoof prints of a nightmare find strange patterns and gaps that don't resemble anything a mundane creature would leave behind.

In most parts of the world, nightmares travel alone; each terrorizes one target or a small group at a time. In the Shadowfell, packs of nightmares haunt old roads, charging through the bleak night in search of victims. Residents of the Shadowfell call the most dangerous passages the "ember ways," named after the smoking tracks left by the nightmares' flaming hooves. Even during the day, the ember ways can be dangerous. The vicious deaths that nightmares deal sometimes create vengeful apparitions that are furious about the grisly manner in which they died.

Haunting and Fear: To encounter a nightmare is to know terror. The beast never goes for a quick kill. It stalks its victims, appearing before them just long enough to make them fear for their lives, then teleporting away. A nightmare doesn't strike down its quarry until the creature is nearly helpless with terror. Victims might believe they have escaped from the pursuit of a nightmare, right up to the moment it delivers the killing blow with its burning hooves.

The nightmare's ability to invade the world of dreams is even more fearsome than its physical form. The creatures and the dreams both called nightmares can become the same. Anyone who does manage to

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flee one of these blazing horses suffers through nights plagued by visions of the beast, and some experience foreboding dreams before encountering the real terror.

Nightmare	**Level 13 Skirmisher**
Large shadow magical beast (mount)	XP 800
HP 138; **Bloodied** 69	**Initiative** +12
AC 27, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 24	**Perception** +12
Speed 10	Darkvision
Resist 20 fire	
Traits	
Shroud of Smoke	
The nightmare gains a +2 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Hell's Ride (mount)	
The nightmare's rider gains resist 20 fire.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Hooves** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +18 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 7 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
Hooves of Hell (fire, zone) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Effect: The nightmare moves up to its speed. Each square it leaves becomes a zone of fire 10 feet tall that lasts until the end of the nightmare's next turn. Any creature that hits the nightmare with a melee attack during this move, or that enters the zone, takes 10 fire damage.	
Move Actions	
Teleport (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The nightmare teleports up to its speed and teleports its rider with it.	
Str 23 (+12) **Dex** 19 (+10) **Wis** 12 (+7)	
Con 26 (+14) **Int** 5 (+3) **Cha** 15 (+8)	
Alignment evil **Languages** –	

Evil Steeds: Undead such as death knights, vampires, liches, and even specters ride nightmares. Outside the Shadowfell and other realms of the dead, vile warriors and spellcasters seek nightmares as mounts to show their dedication to evil and the strength of their domination. Demons, devils, and night hags make sojourns to the Shadowfell to capture and subjugate nightmare mounts.

As a mount, a nightmare is a swift steed as well as a fearsome combatant, and it can transport itself and its rider to and from the Shadowfell. However, no nightmare submits to such service unless its prospective rider can best it in single combat. If the only alternative is death, and the nightmare senses the presence of another who is truly evil, it allows itself to be ridden. Nevertheless, nightmares are never truly tamed. The beasts follow their own instincts, sometimes at the expense of their riders. Both a nightmare and its rider aspire to sow evil, but the two might have different ideas on how to do so.

Striders among Fiends: Though nightmares are associated closely with the Shadowfell, some also gallop through the Abyss and the Nine Hells. The members of these herds have closer bonds between them and specific social structures. The nightmares of the Nine Hells submit to a stallion named Sin's Reward. He is armored in black iron barding covered in spikes, and a cloud of black smoke and white embers surrounds him at all times. In the Abyss, the mare Thunder of Hooves rules over her band with brute force and threats of death. All the nightmares of the Abyss became mutated and demonic over time, but Thunder of Hooves has grown to enormous size and developed another pair of legs.

The two rulers hate each other, but they meet on neutral ground in the Shadowfell once a year to breed. Each time, they produce three foals of great speed and strength. One returns to the Abyss, one to the Hells, and one stays to roam the Shadowfell. Some say that Sin's Reward and Thunder of Hooves were sent long ago by Vecna to spy on the devils and demons, and that their meetings also serve to bring what secrets they have found back to their god. Rumors say they have been corrupted by the planes that they now call home, and that Vecna wants them slaughtered and their hooves returned to him.

The Gloom Meet: On rare nights, dark creatures from the Shadowfell, the Nine Hells, and the Abyss gather to settle disputes and forge wicked alliances. When a suitable night draws near, nightmares rush far and wide to spread the word that the Gloom Meet will soon begin. The scattered firsthand accounts of nightmare appearances become more prevalent for a few weeks as the beasts course across the planes. The few known accounts of the Gloom Meet that reach the civilized world come from scholars or adventurers who have followed a trail of scorched hoof prints to find its location.

About the Author

Logan Bonner's credits include *The Slaying Stone*™ and *Monster Vault*™. He lives in the Seattle area and works as a freelance game designer, writer, and editor. You can follow him on Twitter, where he's @loganbonner.

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Monster Manual Update: Worg

By Logan Bonner

Illustration by Richard Sardinha

These giant wolves hunt with unnatural cunning and an ever-burning hunger for blood. Their evil overshadows even that of their goblin allies.

"Maybe we attack elfs an' we die. We don't attack, worgs get mad an' eat us. Elf arrow better'n worg teeth."
—Grak, goblin beast rider

Though wild wolves can be dangerous, they're never as vicious as worgs. These hulking canine beasts ripple with muscle under their coarse fur, and anyone who looks in one's eyes can see signs of its almost human intelligence. The viciousness of worgs has made them legendary, the villains of many a cautionary fable told to children who wander astray.

Voracious Carnivores: Worgs always hunger. Their bodies run hot, and they spend most of their waking hours hunting for food. Though they are willing to eat any creature that bleeds and screams, their favorite prey is people. Worgs travel through the wilds near roads so they have the best chance of finding humanoid travelers.

When a worg pounces on its prey, it tries to debilitate the creature rather than killing it outright, to savor the shrieking meal as it is being torn apart and devoured. A worg eats every part of its kill, even crunching the bones to shards with its powerful jaws. Nothing remains of a victim unless the worg keeps some trophy to commemorate a particularly challenging fight.

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Wolves of War: Militaristic creatures, particularly goblins, use worgs in their armies when on the warpath. The creatures sometimes act as mounts but more often join the soldiers' ranks. Worgs aren't dumb beasts, and they're as responsible as anyone else for the evil their armies perpetrate. They have an independent streak, which means they aren't inclined to follow orders. They charge to the front and attack whatever they want to.

Goblin armies bring in worgs as a matter of course, but any large gathering of evil forces might attract the creatures into voluntary service. Worgs give no quarter, and they care nothing for political struggles and territory disputes. They want to terrorize, kill, and devour, rending flesh by day and baying at the moon in bloody triumph by night.

Guulvorgs Lay Siege: Even larger and more fearsome than other worgs, guulvorgs serve as siege beasts and enormous mounts when evil forces muster great armies. They use their tails, tipped with stony growths, to batter down gates and crush the towers of opposing armies. Hobgoblins breed these creatures specifically for war, making them bigger, stronger, and dumber than their kin. (The word guulvorg means "war worg" in Goblin.)

Giants, cyclopses, and other humanoids of great size sometimes purchase guulvorgs to ride into battle. Usually each comes with a hobgoblin caretaker whose loyalty is only to coin, not to the cause of its employer. A hobgoblin leader can afford only enough food and space to keep a couple of the beasts at a time within a tribe. Guulvorgs that are encountered running free were almost certainly set loose when their owners could no longer meet the creatures' needs. In the wild, guulvorgs form pairs of one male and one female. With their immense appetites, they make their presence in an area known quickly. Entire villages have been massacred by a single mated pair of guulvorgs.

Signs of Evil to Come: When the armies of evil amass, worgs sense their presence and are attracted from all over. They join the main war party if they can, or might linger nearby to catch anyone fleeing the oncoming hordes. Worgs also appear around graveyards that are crawling with undead or lands plagued by evil curses, drawn by the scent of evil. Wise rangers and patrolling guards know that the presence of a worg bodes ill; even slaying or chasing off the beast cannot avert the encroaching danger.

The mere mention of a worg conveys a sense of foreboding. "He has the face of a worg" means the person in question will no doubt cause trouble or betrayal. Similarly, a worg pelt has earned the reputation of being a blunt threat. For a ruler to receive such a gift can mean only that the sender intends to take everything that ruler controls and raze it to the ground.

Gruesome Warrens: Worgs rarely stay put for long. They are itinerant creatures, always searching for more food to eat and terror to sow. However, sometimes they settle in places where dark magic or horrific deeds have tainted a land with evil. A worg lair resembles a catacomb, with twisting tunnels and multiple exits.

Worgs don't need or keep many possessions, but they do collect trophies of their kills. These grisly treasures—bones of people and animals, armor sundered by worg teeth, and the dearest possessions of victims—lie all around their lairs. The more vile and repulsive an item would be to a human, the more a worg prizes it. A young noble's saddle has greater value and a more prominent status to a worg than a warrior's broken spear, and a child's skull or a doll ranks higher than both.

The Fast of the Eclipse: Like other wolves, worgs howl at the moon. In the time leading up to a lunar eclipse, though, their behavior changes in extraordinary ways. They stop hunting, apparently going on a fast. Travelers find the bodies of lesser wolves on roads—and not just a few, but entire packs at a time. The wolves haven't been eaten, but their throats have been torn out or their skulls crushed. At these times, worgs stalk ever closer to civilization, peering from a distance at travelers, but they don't attack, and they appear gaunt.

When the eclipse finally occurs, the worgs howl down the roads and through towns, slaughtering any person or beast they come upon. They leave all the corpses where they fall until dawn, when they feast. Inhabitants of towns near the woods know about the "fast of the eclipse," and they barricade their doors and stay inside on the night of the event.

Worg	**Level 9 Brute**
Large natural magical beast	XP 400
HP 120; **Bloodied** 60	**Initiative** +7
AC 21, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 20	**Perception** +9
Speed 8	Darkvision
Traits	
☼ **Frightful Growl** (fear) ✦ **Aura** 3	
Each enemy in the aura takes a -1 penalty to attack rolls, and each ally in the aura gains a +1 power bonus to attack rolls.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
Skills Stealth +12	
Str 21 (+9) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 10 (+4)	
Con 20 (+9) **Int** 7 (+2) **Cha** 16 (+7)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal	

Guulvorg	**Level 16 Elite Brute**
Huge natural magical beast	XP 2,800
HP 384; **Bloodied** 192	**Initiative** +11
AC 28, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 27	**Perception** +13
Speed 9	Darkvision
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +21 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d12 + 5 damage, and the target falls prone.	
⸸ **Tail Slam** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +19 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4d8 + 7 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
Guulvorg Fury ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The guulvorg uses *bite* and *tail slam*, each against a different target.	
Str 26 (+16) **Dex** 16 (+11) **Wis** 10 (+8)	
Con 22 (+14) **Int** 5 (+5) **Cha** 15 (+10)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal	

About the Author

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